

Al-Quds

The Place of Jerusalem
in Classical Judaic and Islamic Traditions

by
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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
وصلّى الله على سيدنا محمد
وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين
ومن اتبعهم بإحسان إلى يوم الدين

In the name of Allah, the Merciful,
the Compassionate

may Allah bless and grant peace to
our master Muhammad, the
Prophets and Messengers, all his
family and companions, and
whoever follows them with good
action until the Day of Reckoning

M. A. Al-Sharrah
Liverpool, 1997

Dedication

to my
Mother and Father

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Editor's Preface

The reader must bear in mind that the author uses the words Judaism and Christianity as shorthand references to materials which groups of people collectively referred to as 'Jews' or 'Christians' inherited in a fashion from millennia of rabbis and priests, among which are some fragments, often distorted, of revelations made to Prophets some of whom Allah mentions in Qur'an.

We are in a pretty pickle when we approach these Jewish and Christian texts: we cannot affirm them because we know for sure that they were lost, found again, translated in and out of languages, commented on and the commentaries sometimes incorporated into the texts, and portions erased, altered and 'creatively' rewritten. In addition to that, huge amounts of the texts we deal with are obscurities from rabbinical or priestly literature full of historical, legendary, mythological, magical, superstitious, folklorish and occult material.

However, we may not deny a text when it is presented to us since there may indeed be within it all fragments from revelations granted by Allah ta'ala to some among His Prophets. We do not have the time nor the inclination to try and sort it out since it was precisely because of this mess that Allah ta'ala sent His last Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and abrogated the shari'ahs of those before him.

Our perspective on Judaism and Christianity is what Allah ta'ala says, "The deen with Allah is Islam," and "Whoever seeks other than Islam as a deen, then it will never be accepted from him,

and he will be in the next life one of the losers."

It is with considerable relief then when one comes upon the Islamic texts. The Qur'an is established, both by direct oral transmission from enormous numbers of one generation to enormous numbers of another and textually from the first days of revelation, in a way that no other text, ancient or modern, can boast. The hadith literature, although recorded later was examined critically and ruthlessly by Muslim scholars. The author does not explore those critical studies of the ahadith since that falls outside of the scope of his study and is not the point of the book which is to provide an overview of the history of the city and its status among jews and Muslims.

There is one other issue which it might be wise to mention here. Judaeo-christians talk of God, and they mention Solomon, David, and Moses, et al. However, where possible the unique Divine name, Allah, and the Arabic names of the Prophets are used here – except in direct quotations from old judaic texts – for this age is the epoch of Islam and of the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. However, sometimes when reading the old rabbinical texts one has such a sensation of being in a different universe – a claustrophobic, narrow, parochial one – that one almost prefers the fictions of 'God', 'Moses' and 'David' to remain, and that one should not connect these with the clarity and purity of the Islamic revelation.

Judaeo-christian terms and texts may well be unfamiliar to our readers and so we have devoted an appendix to them, for which we thank Hajj Ahmad Thomson for access to his unpublished *Next World Order* from which we obtained the material for our glossary. For Islamic terms we refer the reader to the indispensable *Glossary of Islamic Terms* by Aisha Bewley (Ta-Ha, London, 1998).

The author has done us an invaluable service by this clear evaluation of the positions of Muslims and Jews on the status of the City of al-Quds and this overview of the texts that bear on that.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The purpose of this book is to examine the place of al-Quds – Jerusalem – in the classic religious sources of Judaism and Islam. Al-Quds is a holy city for both Jews and Muslims. How did it acquire that status? How is its holiness defined within these two traditions?

This chapter defines the subject of the book and outlines its general approach.

Chapter Two provides essential background. In it we discuss briefly the topography of al-Quds, its names in Jewish and Muslim sources, and its long and eventful history. This survey of the history of al-Quds is not intended to say anything new. Nor does it reflect in any detail modern advanced research on this subject. Rather, I mean to give a summary of the history of the city as it is generally perceived within the two traditions, by Muslims and Jews. This account tends, therefore, to rely simply on traditional sources. There is little point in producing a revisionist history of the city, if that history is far removed from the history which has influenced the two traditions.

Chapter Three deals with the sanctity of al-Quds in Judaism. After a discussion of the Judaic concept of holiness, we argue that al-Quds is regarded as a holy city within Judaism because of its special relationship to God and to God's purposes in history. The holiness of al-Quds is established by the fact that it is part of the Land which Allah is said to have promised to Ibrahim, 'alaihi's-salam, in the covenant which He made with him – a covenant

which was reaffirmed with all his descendants down to the time of the events surrounding Mount Sinai.

The holiness of al-Quds is also linked to the fact that it was there that the Temple – the great Jewish national shrine – was built. The choice of al-Quds as the Temple's location was made relatively late in Jewish history, only in the time of King Dawud. Once that choice was made it was supported by traditions and oracles, and was seen as having been intended by Allah from the beginning of time. The Temple was laid out with concentric areas of holiness leading inwards to the Holy of Holies. That expresses powerfully the concept of holiness. It creates a mental map in which space is organised with the Temple at its centre. Even after the Temple was destroyed, the site retained the highest sanctity in Judaism. The presence of that site within al-Quds still conveys sanctity to the whole city.

Al-Quds is also holy within Judaism because of the events from the history of the prophets which took place there. This idea is explored through a discussion of the story of the Binding of Ishaq, 'alaihi's-salam. From Biblical times, this important event was located on the Temple Mount in al-Quds. The place where Ibrahim built the altar on which he is said to have laid Ishaq, 'alahima's-salam, was the place where the Children of Isra'il later raised the altar of burnt offering in the Temple. This was not simply a case of a sacred site tending to attract to itself ever more events from the history of the Prophets – a pattern well established in the history of religions. They located the Binding of Ishaq on the Temple Mount for theological reasons. It legitimised the Temple cult and explained why sacrifices offered in the Temple were effective in atoning for sin. They explained that the sacrifices recalled the Binding of Ishaq and that when God saw them he remembered the offering of Ishaq. It was through the merit of Ishaq, not through the slaughter of an animal in itself, that sins were pardoned.

Al-Quds, as a place of supreme holiness within Judaism, attracted many myths which emphasised its unique character and its sanctity. We investigate one of these by examining the tradition that al-Quds is the centre or navel of the earth. This idea was given cosmogonic significance: they believed that al-Quds is the place from which the world grew outward at creation, that it is the oldest place on earth and the umbilical cord of the world. The precise spot from which the earth grew was identified as the rock on the Temple Mount, thus emphasising once again the idea that within the sacred geography of al-Quds the Temple Mount carries greater holiness than any other place. The idea that al-Quds is the navel of the earth relates not only to its position on the horizontal plane of the habitable world, but also to its position on a vertical plane, in relation to heaven above and hell below. Upwards it corresponds to the heavenly Quds; downwards it corresponds to Gehinnom, the entrance to which lies beside al-Quds. It is, therefore, an axis of the universe, a point where there is a unique possibility to communicate with the unseen worlds of heaven and hell.

The Fourth chapter investigates the holiness of al-Quds in Islam. We begin it by recording some passages in the Qur'an and in the hadith literature which explicitly affirm the holiness of the City. I note those traditions which state that good deeds such as giving sadaqah, being buried, or setting out on Hajj are regarded as especially meritorious if performed in al-Quds. These traditions clearly show that al-Quds is special for Muslims. But why has it been defined as Islam's third most holy city? There are a number of reasons:

Al-Quds was the first Qiblah. The Prophet Muhammad, *sal-la'llahu 'alaihi wa sallam*, and his community first prayed towards al-Quds. Only later did Allah decree that Muslims should pray facing Makkah. Prayer is only made facing a sacred place, and though the direction of the Qiblah was changed, tradition af-

firms that the prayer of those who prayed facing al-Quds was valid.

Al-Quds is holy for Muslims because events from the history of the Prophet and of the revelation took place there. Muslims accept that the genuine Prophets among the ancient Children of Israel received revelation from Allah and acknowledges and honours those ancient Hebrew Prophets. The events of their lives are, consequently, also part of Islamic history. But there were also events from Islamic history in a more defined sense of the term which happened in al-Quds. The most important of these are associated with the Isra' and the Mi'raj of the Prophet. The Prophet made the Night Journey (Isra') to the Farthest Mosque in al-Quds and there led all the great prophets of former generations in prayer. From there too he made his ascent (Mi'raj) into heaven. This is mentioned in Qur'an. This event is immensely important within Islam, and helps to define in subtle ways Islam's relationship to Judaism and to the City of al-Quds.

The Prophet's visit to the Temple area in al-Quds is permanently commemorated by the great Mosques that were erected on the Temple site – the al-Aqsa and the Dome of the Rock. However, these Mosques, and indeed the whole sacred area of al-Haram ash-Sharif are not regarded by Muslims simply as holy places established in the Muslim era. There is a continuity between them and the Temple itself, the Masjid Sulayman. We explore this idea through Muslim accounts of the capture of al-Quds by the caliph 'Umar. These show that 'Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, was not simply conquering al-Quds and converting it for the first time to Islam. Rather he was returning it to the purity of its past worship, which had been abandoned both by Christianity and by Judaism. This is conveyed vividly by his symbolic cleansing of the Temple area, which in his day had become a rubbish tip. This is further developed in the traditions about the Second Mosque. According to Islamic sources the First Mosque

was the Ka'bah in Makkah, which was erected in the dim and distant past. But forty years after the erection of the Ka'bah the Second Mosque was built on the Haram in al-Quds. Thus what 'Umar was doing was once again rebuilding and restoring the Second Mosque.

Chapters Three and Four deal essentially with the past of al-Quds in both traditions, but al-Quds also has an important future in both Islam and Judaism: the continuing sanctity of al-Quds is affirmed in the eschatologies of both religions. Chapter Five deals with the place of al-Quds in the eschatology of Judaism and Chapter Six with the place of al-Quds in the eschatology of Islam.

Chapter Seven draws some general conclusions from the detailed study contained in the preceding chapters and addresses briefly the question of how the close parallels between the Jewish and the Islamic traditions may be explained.

This study does not claim to be exhaustive. Its subject is too large and complex to be comprehensively treated within the confines of a single book. We have limited ourselves by concentrating on the classic early religious sources of both traditions. In the case of Judaism this has meant essentially the Bible, the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha and the Mishnah and Talmud. In the case of Islam it has meant the Qur'an and ahadith, the classic commentaries on the Qur'an and the writings of the great traditionists such as Muslim and al-Bukhari. We have adopted a synthetic approach and have not attempted to introduce questions of literary, form or historical criticism. Our purpose is to let the traditions speak for themselves, and to accept them on their own terms. Only in this way can the authentic voice of the traditions begin to be heard. Critical, historical analysis of the traditions is a different exercise which we have not attempted to pursue.

Al-Quds functions as an important holy place and as a central religious symbol within three great religious traditions, Judaism,

Christianity and Islam. The Christian and the Jewish sacred histories of al-Quds are well known and have been the subject of many studies, both popular and learned. The Muslim sacred history of al-Quds is much less well known and is less well-formed in modern terms. The result is that the Muslim sacred history of al-Quds tends today to be overshadowed by the Christian and the Jewish. It is largely submerged and invisible. This book begins the task of redressing the balance. By comparing and contrasting the sacred history of al-Quds in Judaism and Islam it lays the foundations of a well-formed account of the Muslim view of the Holy City.

Chapter 2

The Location, Topography, Names and History of al-Quds

The Location and Topography of al-Quds

Palestine was destined by its geography to become an important historical centre, because it is strategically located for trade both by land and sea. By land it alone connects Asia and Africa, and, along with Egypt, it is the only country in the region with ports on both the Mediterranean and the Red Sea.

Al-Quds is located on a plateau between the mountains of the Beth-El in the north and of al-Khalil (Hebron) in the south. Its exact position is 35° 14' east longitude and 31° 64' latitude, 32 miles east of the Mediterranean Sea and 14 miles west of the Dead Sea. Consisting of two ridges, it is situated on a limestone plateau 800 m above the sea level. Its rugged terrain was a military advantage, making it easy to defend. It was hard to reach, being protected by steep slopes on three sides, by the Kidron Brook to the east, the Hinnom valley to the south, and the Tyropoeon valley to the west. This last valley separates the eastern and western parts of the city. Although its position is easily defensible, there is only one permanent spring near the city. It is in the Kidron Valley, about seven hundred yards above the junction with the western ravine, now called the Spring with the Steps (*Ayn Umm ad-Daraj*), or the Virgin's Spring. In the Hebrew Bible it is called Gihon.

Between the Kidron valley and Tyropoeon a long narrow spur extends southward, and it was on this narrow spur that the first town was built, the town of Jebus. This was the city which was

captured by Dawud, peace be upon him, and made into his capital. It was on this site that he built his palace and bought the land on which the Temple was later to be erected, the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

In the reigns of Dawud and Sulayman, peace be upon both of them, the city extended northwards; the Temple was built on a northern hill and the royal palace between the old city and the Temple area. In the reign of Hezekiah al-Quds expanded to cover 50 hectares. During Herod's reign the city covered an area of about 90 hectares, but when the emperor Hadrian rebuilt it the city was much smaller than its predecessor. During the Christian era the size of al-Quds fluctuated considerably. The old city was given its definitive shape in the 16th century by Sulayman the Magnificent, who built the present-day massive stone walls of the old city in 1573. Inside the walls of the old city, where all the inhabitants lived until the middle of the 19th century, four quarters are distinguished: in the northwest, the Christian Quarter located around the Holy Sepulchre; in the southwest the Armenian Quarter; in the centre and north the Muslim Quarter; and in the southeast the Jewish Quarter.

The famous mountain peaks around al-Quds include Jabal Masharef (Mount Scopus) to the north and Mukabbir to the south. It was via the latter mountain that 'Umar is reputed to have entered al-Quds and declared, 'Allahu Akbar,' from which the mountain supposedly derives its name. Jabal az-Zaytun (the Mount of Olives) lies to the east and Jabal Sihyun (Mount Zion), otherwise known as Jabal an-Nabi Dawud (the Mount of the Prophet Dawud), to the west. Jabal Muriyah (Mount Moriah, where the Haram now stands) lies west of Jabal az-Zaytun (see Figures 2.1 & 2.2).

The Names of al-Quds in Jewish Tradition

In discussing the names of al-Quds it is important to distinguish

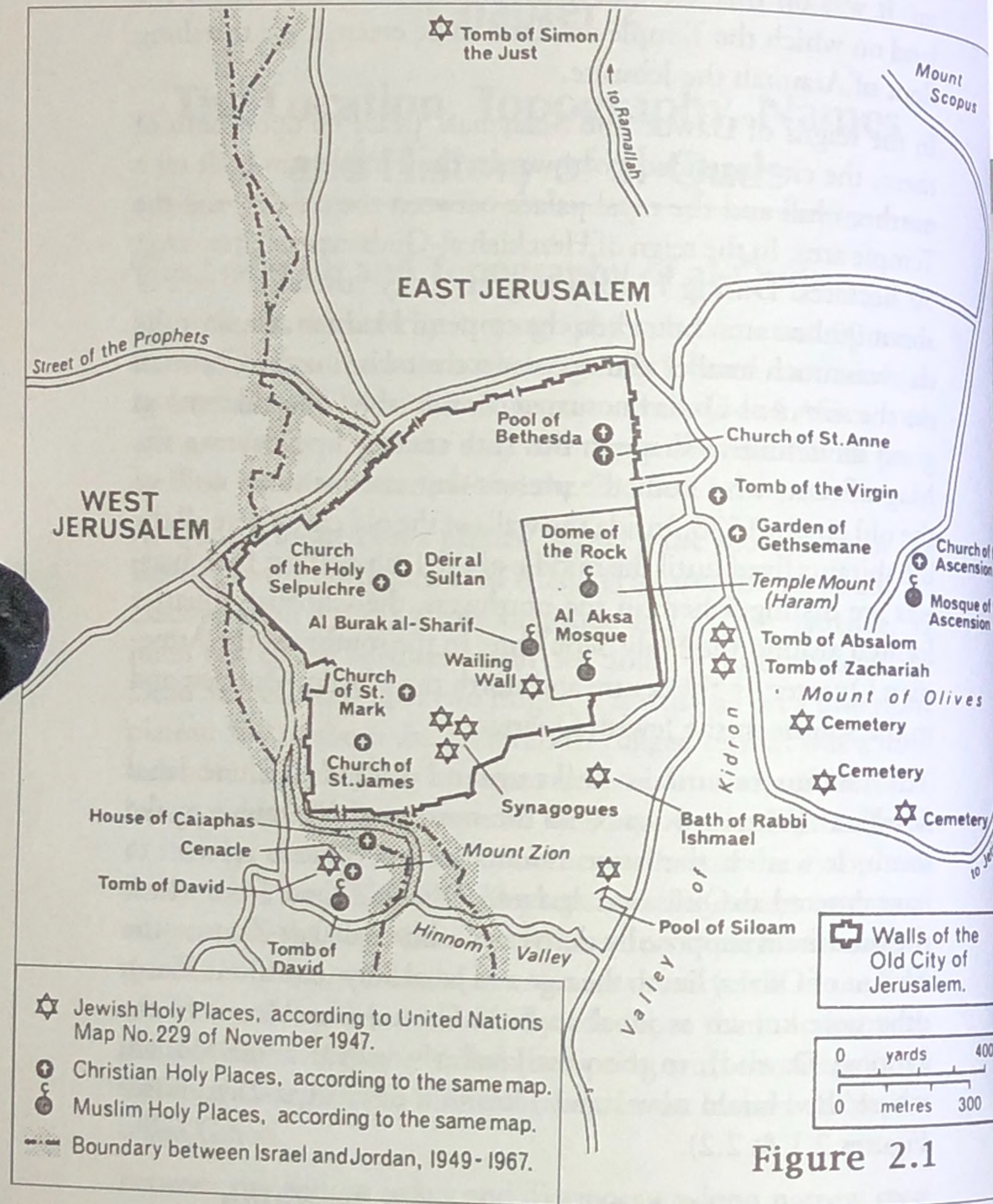


Figure 2.1



Figure 2.2 General view of city showing Aqsa Mosque on the left
The Dome of the Rock on the right



Dome of the Rock

between real topographical names and metaphorical or symbolic titles. The former are the actual geographical names of the city used in administrative documents such as treaties, or in historical records; the latter are titles used in literary or poetic texts to express some characteristic of the city, or to make a theological statement about it.

Topographical Names

Jerusalem

'Jerusalem' is the oldest and most enduring topographical name for the city. It found first in the Egyptian Execration Texts of the 19th – 18th centuries BCE in the form *Rushalimum*. It occurs next in Akkadian in the Amarna Letters of the 14th century BCE as *Urushalim*. In later Assyrian records, e.g. Sennacherib's account of his siege of Jerusalem in 701 BCE, the dominant spelling is *Ursalimmu*.

The consonantal base of the name is attested in two forms in the Hebrew Bible: *yruwshlm* and *yruwshlym*. Both are traditionally vocalized as *yerushalayim*. The etymology is uncertain but is probably West Semitic. The most plausible explanation is that there are two elements: *yruw*, 'to found' or 'to establish', and *shlm*, the name of the Canaanite god Shalem, who was the tutelary deity of the city. Hence, 'foundation of (the god) Shalem.' The oldest reference to the city in Hebrew may be in the very early story about Ibrahim's meeting with 'Melchizedek, king of Salem' in Genesis. There seems to be little doubt that 'Salem' here is a shortened form of the name Jerusalem. In Psalm 76:2 Salem occurs in parallel to Zion in a clear reference to Jerusalem.

The Hebrew *Yerushalayim* was usually transliterated into Greek as *Ierousalem* or aspirated as *Hierousalem*. Some Greek writers derived the etymology of this name as 'Holy Place of the Solymi' (*hieron Solymon*) as if it were Greek. From Greek writers the name passed into Latin as *Ierousalem*, *Hierusalem* or *Hierosolyma*.

Jebus

In some Biblical texts (Joshua 15:8; 18:28; Judges 19:10; 1 Chronicles 11:4-5) the name Jebus (Hebrew *Yebus*) seems to be used as the pre-Dawudic name of Jerusalem. The tribe from whom Dawud took the city were certainly known as Jebusites (in Arabic *Yabus*) and they were descendants of and a subgroup of the Canaanites (*Kan'an*), but some have doubted whether the city itself was ever known as Jebus. As we have already seen Egyptian and Akkadian sources from well before the time of Dawud already refer to the city as 'Jerusalem'. But where, then, did the name 'Jebusite' come from? It is more likely that it means 'inhabitant of the town of Jebus', than that the name Jebus was derived from the gentilic Jebusite. If Jebus was a real topographical designation for Jerusalem, then it may have been purely local.

Zion

The name Zion (Heb. *Ziyyon*), the etymology and meaning of which is totally unclear (perhaps 'dry area'), occurs over 150 times in the Old Testament both as a toponym and as a title for Jerusalem. As a toponym it denoted originally the southeastern ridge of the Ophel, the city of Dawud (2 Sam. 5:7). However, in the Byzantine period the name migrated westwards to denote the western hill. 'Zion' also occurs frequently in the Hebrew Bible in poetic contexts, notably the Psalms, where it is used symbolically to highlight Jerusalem as the place of the Temple and as the focus of Jewish religious and national aspiration.

City of David

The designation 'City of David' occurs twice in the Hebrew Bible, viz., 2 Samuel 5:7 and 1 Chronicles 15:1. In both these references it seems clear that the name applies specifically to the old settlement on the Ophel ridge. This area probably retained the name when the city spread to the areas to the north and west of the Ophel. The name clearly originated after Dawud captured the city and made it his capital.

Aelia-Capitolina

After the Bar Kokhba Revolt of 132-135 CE. Jews were banned from living in Jerusalem. It was redesigned and rebuilt as a typical Graeco-Roman city by the Emperor Hadrian and renamed *Aelia Capitolina*. 'Aelia' was derived from the emperor's second name; 'Capitolina' recalled Jupiter, Juno and Minerva, the deities of the Capitoline in Rome, who became the patrons of Hadrian's new city. The new name did not, however, endure and, probably due to the growing influence of Christianity, the city reverted to its standard Biblical designation of 'Jerusalem'.

Symbolic Titles

The Holy City ('*ir ha-qodesh*)

By far the most common title of al-Quds in Jewish tradition is 'The Holy city' (Hebrew: '*ir ha-qodesh*'). This title occurs five times in the Hebrew Bible. The title indicates more than reverence for the site. Al-Quds was the place of the Temple and some of the sanctity of the Temple extended to the whole of the city. Within the perimeter of the city stricter rules of purity were observed than in other settlements. Thus a corpse could not be kept in the city overnight but had to be removed outside the walls. (BK 82b; Sifra, Be-Hakkotai; 6:1).

Ariel

The symbolic name 'Ariel' occurs in the book of Isaiah: 'Ho! Ariel, Ariel, the city where David encamped'; 'yet I will distress Ariel ... and the multitudes of all the nations that fight against Ariel ...'. The meaning of the name is obscure and has been variously interpreted as 'Lion of God' or 'Altar/Hearth of God'. (*Lion Encyclopaedia*, p. 165).

Other Designations

There are numerous other titles for al-Quds found in classical Jewish sources. In an elaborate allegory in Ezekiel 23, Samaria and Jerusalem are described as harlots under the names 'Oholah'

and 'Oholibah' – the meanings of which are not known for certain – because they have been seduced by the worship of idols from their allegiance to the true God.

Al-Quds is also referred to as 'The Mountain of God', 'The Mountain of the Lord', and 'The Holy Mountain'. All three titles are, significantly, used elsewhere for Mount Sinai. Note also the typical piling up of poetic epithets in Psalm 48:1-2:

'Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised, in the city of our God, in his holy mountain. Beautiful of elevation, the joy of all the earth is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the Great King'.

The designation 'City of Judah' is also found, denoting Jerusalem's status as the capital of the kingdom of Judah. Other titles include, 'City of righteousness', 'the perfection of beauty', 'princess among the cities', 'faithful city', 'city of God', and 'city of justice'.

While the above names and titles were applied to the city of al-Quds, there were some names which were more specifically used of the Temple, such as 'the House of God', 'the House of the Lord', 'the Holy Temple', 'the Temple of the Lord', and (of the visionary Temple) 'the Sanctuary'. Altogether al-Quds is mentioned some 2,000 times in the Hebrew Bible.

The Names of al-Quds in Islamic Tradition

Al-Quds is not mentioned by name in the Qur'an, but appears under various appellations such as 'the City of Sanctity'. Al-Quds, which became its standard designation in Islamic sources, recalls the ancient Hebrew name *Ir ha-Qodesh*, literally 'City of Holiness'. This matches the designation of the whole region in which al-Quds is found as 'the Holy Land' (*al-Ard al-Muqaddasah*) – an expression already found in the Qur'an:

O my people! enter the holy land which Allah has assigned you, and turn not back ignominiously, for then you will be overthrown to your ruin. (Surat al-Ma'idah, 23)

The same region is referred to also as 'the Blessed Land' (*al-Ard al-Mubarakah*):

But We delivered him and (his nephew) Lut (and directed them) to the land which We have blessed for all beings. (Surat al-Anbiya', 71)

Under the rule of the Ottomans, who paid a great deal of attention to Jerusalem, the city was known as *al-Quds ash-Sharif* (the Noble Sanctuary).

According to the commentators, al-Quds is twice mentioned in the Qur'an as a 'hamlet' or 'town' (*qaryah*):

Or like the one who passed by a town (*qaryah*) which had fallen into ruin. He asked, 'How can Allah restore this to life when it has died?' (Surat al-Baqarah, 258.)

This is considered by some to be a reference to 'Uzayr (Ezra) describing how, when he returned to Jerusalem after the exile, he found it totally destroyed. Also in Sura 7 (al-A'raf) we read:

And [remember] when it was said to them: 'Dwell in this town (*qaryah*) and eat therein as you wish, but say, "Relieve us of our burdens!" and enter the gate prostrating. Your mistakes will be forgiven you...' (Surat al-A'raf, 161)

An allusion to the site of al-Quds has also been found in the 'high place' (*rabwah*) mentioned in Surah 23 (al-Mu'minun):

We made the son of Maryam and his mother a Sign: We gave them both shelter on high ground, affording rest and security and furnished with springs. (Surat al-Mu'minun 51)

Maryam withdrew from her family to a place on the eastern side of the upper room (*mihrab*) of the Great Temple situated in al-Quds, to purify herself from menstruation and to comb her hair.

Iliya

Before the Prophet's time it seems that the city was known as

Iliya. This name, mentioned in the Covenant of 'Umar, is probably derived from the Roman name *Aelia*.

The sanctity of al-Quds in Islamic tradition is, of course, derived from the presence in the city, on the site of the ancient Temple, of the two mosques – al-Masjid al-Aqsa and Qubbat as-Sakhra (erroneously called 'the Mosque of 'Umar' by many western writers). The former is named after the 'farthest mosque' mentioned in Surah 17 (al-Isra):

Glory be to the One who took His Slave for a journey by night from the Sacred Mosque to the farthest Mosque, whose precincts We have blessed. (Surat al-Isra', 1)

Islamic tradition locates 'the farthest mosque' in al-Quds. The al-Aqsa mosque is also known as Masjid Sulayman (the Mosque of Sulayman). The name Bait al-Maqdis or Bait al-Muqaddas (traditionally taken to mean 'the House of Purity [pure of wrong actions and idols]') is taken by some to be a designation of al-Quds, but according to Mujir al-Din al-Hanbali it refers specifically to al-Masjid al-Aqsa, while al-Quds refers to the city as a whole. It recalls the common Hebrew designation of the Temple as *Beit ha-Miqdash*.

The History of al-Quds

The Canaanite Period

Al-Quds has been looked upon as a holy city for the past thirty-eight centuries, first by the Canaanites who founded it, then by the Israelites, then by pagans, then by Christians, and lastly by Muslims.

Al-Quds is first mentioned as a Canaanite city-state in the Egyptian Execration Texts of the 19th – 18th centuries BCE. According to the evidence of archaeology, it was founded about 1800 BC by the Jebusites, a subgroup of the Canaanites, who migrated from the Arabian Peninsula to the Fertile Crescent and Pales-

tine. It is under the name Jebus that it appears in the biblical books of Joshua and Judges. The numerous samples of pottery that the Parker Mission gathered from the caves on Ophel give concrete evidence of a primitive urban nucleus on this hill during the third millennium BC.

Israelite Period

According to Jewish tradition, Ibrahim, peace be upon him, the ancestor of the Jewish people, came to Palestine from Mesopotamia, passing through Syria and arriving in the region of Shechem (Nablus), where God promised him the land (Shechem and the surrounding area). Later, he moved to Egypt, and afterwards returned to Palestine. Ibrahim was succeeded by his son Ishaq and the latter by Ishaq's son Ya'qub (Isra'il). Ya'qub and his children went into Egypt, where their offspring settled and increased in numbers. They were oppressed by the Egyptians, from whom they finally escaped around 1300 BCE.

Islamic tradition also mentions this Exodus, though in a slightly different form from that found in the Hebrew Bible. According to the Qur'an Allah commanded the prophet Musa, peace be upon him, to lead the Children of Isra'il out of Egypt and into the holy land where they must fight against the idolaters.

He said, 'O my people! enter into the holy land which Allah has assigned you.' (Surat al-Ma'idah, 23)

The Children of Isra'il, however, disobeyed Musa and refused to enter the Holy Land:

They said: 'O Musa! there are a people of exceeding strength in it: we will not enter it until they leave: if they leave, then we shall enter' (Surat al-Ma'idah, 24)

They said, 'O Musa! We will never enter it so long as they are there. So go you and your Lord and fight. We will stay sitting here.' (Surat al-Ma'idah, 26)

On account of their lack of faith and their disobedience, Allah punished them and caused them to wander in the Sinai desert.

He said, 'The land will be forbidden to them for forty years during which they will wander aimlessly about the earth. Do not grieve over this degenerate people.' (Surat al-Ma'idah, 28)

The generation of malcontents was condemned not to enter the Holy Land; many of those who were twenty years old and upwards were to die in the wilderness. Only their children were to reach the Promised Land. After forty years, they crossed the Jordan opposite what is now Jericho, but by that time Musa, Harun, and the whole of the older generation had died.

According to the Bible, after the death of Musa, the Israelites were led into the promised land by Joshua, with the first victory in battle occurring at Jericho. According to the biblical account Joshua defeated and killed a confederation of Canaanite kings, including Adoni-zedek, who may have had some connection with Jerusalem. However, the city of Jerusalem was so strongly fortified that it was able to hold out against the Israelite invaders for more than two centuries.

The Reign of King Dawud

Israelite settlement in the Land was threatened by the arrival of the Philistines (*Palestinians*) from the west. Many wars ensued, in which the Israelites were from time to time badly beaten. To face the threat they had to unite more closely under a king. Their first king, Talut (Saul in the Bible), who fell in battle against the Philistines at Mount Gilboa, was succeeded by King Dawud, who proved to be a more effective general and who successfully defeated the Philistines. In about 1000 BCE, he became king in Hebron (al-Khalil) for seven years and six months over both the northern tribes (Israel) and the southern tribes (Judah and Benjamin), so that the whole nation was united under one ruler. He

finally succeeded in taking the Jebusite stronghold of Jerusalem, and by capturing Jerusalem he unified the Israelite tribes into a single kingdom. He captured a town that belonged neither to the northern Israelite tribes nor to Judah in the south, and made it his political and religious capital. Dawud ruled for forty years: seven years in Hebron and thirty-three years in Jerusalem, which became known as the City of Dawud. Later, he brought the Ark of the Covenant into Zion and installed it in its sacred tent. Afterwards, he purchased the threshing floor of Araunah in order to build a Temple there as a permanent home for the Ark. Dawud fortified the city, rebuilt the Jebusite Citadel called Zion, and prepared the extension of the city northward.

The Reign of King Sulayman

After the death of Dawud, his son Sulayman succeeded him as ruler over the united nation. Sulayman extended the city and built the Temple to replace the tent which had previously housed the Ark of the Covenant. With the aid of skilful craftsmen, under the direction of Hiram of Tyre, he also built his palace. The building of the first Temple by Sulayman gave Jerusalem a unique character, which combined the roles of holy city and royal city.

After Sulayman had reigned for thirty-two years he died, and his kingdom was divided into two, in accordance with the words of the prophet Ahijah: 'I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee [Jeroboam].'

In succeeding years, conflict broke out between Judah in the south, with its capital at Jerusalem, and Israel in the north, with its capital at Shechem (Nablus). In this way the divided nation became weak, so that ultimately, in 722 BCE, the northern kingdom of Israel was invaded by Assyria and the population was transported to Mesopotamia. Judah in turn became a vassal of the Babylonians, who besieged the city from the 15th January 588 BCE until they captured it on the 30th July 587 BCE. Its walls, Temple and houses were completely demolished. Its in-

habitants were either killed, enslaved, or deported into exile. These events are reflected as follows in the Qur'an:

When the promised first warning came to pass, We sent against you slaves of Our's given to terrible warfare: they entered the inmost parts of your house; and it was a warning (completely) fulfilled. (Surat al-Isra, 5)

The Babylonian Exile and the Persian Period

Thus, on account of their transgressions, the Temple was destroyed. However, the Jews in exile in Babylon never forgot their homeland. As Psalm 137 shows, many longed to return to Jerusalem: 'If I forget thee, O Jerusalem let my right hand forget her cunning' (verses 5-6). This hope was realised when in 537 BCE, Cyrus the Great, King of Persia, invaded Babylon and issued a decree that the people who had been deported could return. Among the leaders of those who returned to Judaea were Zerubabel, Jeshua, Ezra and Nehemiah. The Temple was rebuilt between 520 and 515 BCE. Again, this event is said to be referred to by the following ayah in the Qur'an:

Then once again We gave you the upper hand over them: We gave you increase in resources and sons, and made you the more numerous in manpower. (Surat al-Isra, 6)

But the rebuilt Temple did not rival in beauty the great Temple that Sulayman had built, nor did it contain the Ark of the Covenant, which had disappeared along with other sacred objects preserved in the former Temple.

The Greek Period and the Hasmonaean State

Jerusalem remained under the rule of Persia until the Persians were defeated by Alexander the Great in 331 BCE. After his death, Alexander's empire was broken up among his generals, Palestine finally falling under the control of Seleucus. Seleucus's successor, Antiochus IV, through his strong advocacy of Hellenisation, provoked a revolt among conservative Jews, led by Judas

Maccabaeus and his brothers of the priestly Hasmonaean house. The aim of Judas was to purify Jerusalem and cleanse the Temple from pagan objects and practices.

In 164 BCE, the Jews set up a successful blockade around Jerusalem, and were able to defeat a Seleucid force in battle near Beth-Zur. They reoccupied the Temple mount, cleansed the Temple, rebuilt the altar, and resumed sacrifice. But the Hasmonaean government became weakened by internal divisions and collapsed after a century.

The Roman Period

In 63 BC, the Roman general Pompey captured Jerusalem. For a period the city was ruled directly by a Roman procurator but then in 40 BCE Herod the Great, who had already distinguished himself as governor of Galilee, was appointed client King of Judaea by the Romans. Herod, who was a master builder, undertook a total refurbishment of the Temple in Jerusalem, which transformed it into one of the great buildings of the ancient world.

Around 30 CE, Jesus of Nazareth, Sayyiduna 'Isa, peace be upon him, began to preach his message of the imminent coming of the kingdom of Allah. Although he and his followers regarded his teaching as being a continuation and development of Judaism, he faced strong opposition from the Jews, which is alleged by the Christians to have led to his trial and execution. The Gospels relate that he was crucified, died, was buried, and claim that on the third day he rose bodily, walked about, ate with his disciples, and was afterwards taken up bodily into heaven. This view is completely rejected by Islam:

And their saying (boastfully), 'We killed the Messiah, 'Isa the son of Maryam, the Messenger of Allah'; but they did not kill him, nor crucify him, but so it was made to appear to them; and those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge, but only conjecture to fol-

low, for of a surety they did not kill him: rather, Allah raised him up to Himself; and Allah is exalted in Power, Wise. (Surat an-Nisa', 156)

Nevertheless, many of the non-Jews and other local people accepted the new religious message, and so Christianity was founded, which was later to become the official religion of the Roman empire.

In 66 CE the Jews rebelled against Rome. The Roman general Titus came and destroyed Jerusalem and reduced its Temple to ashes in 70 CE, thus fulfilling, according to Christian tradition, a prophecy of 'Isa: 'See ye not all these things? Verily, I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.' This was the second time that the temple in Jerusalem had been destroyed by alien hands. The Qur'an refers to this event in the following words:

So when the second of the warnings came to pass, (We permitted your enemies) to disfigure your faces, and to enter the Temple as they had entered it before, and to visit with destruction all that fell into their power. (Surat al-Isra, 7)

In 132 CE, the Roman Emperor Hadrian published his plans for a new, very Roman, Jerusalem. This may have been the provocation for the new Jewish revolt, which broke out in 132 CE under the leadership of Bar Kokhba. The Romans once again defeated the Jews and what was left of the city of Jerusalem was razed to the ground in 135 CE. Then Hadrian started to construct his new city called Aelia Capitolina and installed the Roman deity Jupiter in its main temple. Jews were banned from the city.

The Byzantine Period

Early in the fourth century CE the Roman emperor Constantine recognised Christianity as the official religion of the empire, and

moved the capital of the empire to Byzantium, which he rebuilt and named Constantinople after himself. A new interest in Jerusalem and in Palestine developed. Helena, the emperor's mother, who converted to Christianity before her son, built the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The spread of Christianity and the rise and practice of pilgrimage gave a new importance to the city of the crucifixion and resurrection. The discovery of the Holy Sepulchre and the erection of the Church of the Anastasis made Jerusalem a great religious centre. The churches of St. Stephen and St. Mary were also built in the city. What Byzantine Christian Jerusalem looked like is illustrated by the famous mosaic map discovered in 1897 in the Church of St. George in Madeba in Jordan. This contains a pictorial representation of the Holy Land, with a special panel for Jerusalem, done in mosaics set into the floor of the church. It gives a bird's-eye view of the city. Its date is the latter part of the sixth century CE and it is thus the oldest representation we have of Jerusalem.

The Second Persian Period

In 614 CE, when the Persians had overrun Syria and marched on Jerusalem, the Jews helped them to capture the city and took part in the massacre of the Christians and the destruction of the churches. This defeat of Roman power in Palestine is specifically mentioned in the Qur'an:

The Romans have been defeated in a land close by; but they, (even) after (this) defeat of theirs will soon be victorious, within a few years. To Allah belongs the decision in the past and in the future: On that day believers shall rejoice with the help of Allah. (Surat ar-Rum, 1-4)

Fourteen years later, Heraclius recovered the city of Jerusalem and renewed Hadrian's ban on the Jews.

The Muslim Period

After the defeat of the Byzantines at the battle of Yarmuk in 636 CE, the whole of Syria including Palestine fell into Muslim hands,

town by town, except Jerusalem, which had been strongly fortified by the Byzantines. In the following year, the whole of Iraq fell under Muslim control after the defeat of the Persians in the battle of Qadisiyyah. In 638 CE, the Muslims reached Jerusalem and besieged the city. Negotiations followed, which resulted in its peaceful surrender to the caliph 'Umar, may Allah be pleased with him. Christians were unmolested and permitted to follow their accustomed worship.

Having secured the city 'Umar's next concern was to identify the place hallowed by the Prophet's Night Journey and, after diligent search, this was found concealed under a dung hill. 'Umar himself led the Muslims in uncovering it, but directed that no prayers be held on or near it until the place had been washed by rain three times. On his order, a simple mosque was erected on the place, made of wood, to accommodate 3,000 worshippers.

Sixty years later, in 72 AH/691-2 CE, the magnificent Dome of the Rock was built by 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan. Two years later, the al-Aqsa Mosque was built, commemorating the place of the Prophet's prostration and perpetuating the name of the place of worship mentioned in the Qur'an. The two mosques and their surroundings acquired the appellation of al-Haram ash-Sharif (the Noble Sanctuary). Great architectural achievements were made in the city by the Umayyad caliphs, who accorded it their special attention. The city's sanctity brought great Islamic prestige for the Umayyads. It was no coincidence that more than one Umayyad caliph – Mu'awiyah (50 AH/670 CE) may Allah be pleased with him, 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan (68 AH/687-8 CE), and Sulayman ibn 'Abd al-Malik (96 AH/715 CE) – received the *bai'ah* (oath of allegiance) in Jerusalem.

In the Abbasid period, the centre of the Islamic Empire was moved from Damascus to Baghdad, and Jerusalem had to relinquish its religious pre-eminence to Makkah and Madinah. At the beginning of their rule, however, the Abbasids paid special tribute to

the holy character of the city. This was shown by the first visit of al-Mansur, who set out for Jerusalem immediately after returning to Baghdad from the pilgrimage to Makkah in 140 AH/758 CE, and by his second visit in 771 CE. Al-Mahdi also visited the city in 780 CE and had the al-Aqsa Mosque repaired. Later, al-Ma'mun (813-833) allotted funds for repairing the buildings in the Haram area.

At the beginning of the ninth century, the Abbasid caliphs began to rely on Turkish mercenaries who, in time, assumed more and more power. By the middle of the century, some of the leaders of these Turks had become governors of provinces. One of them, Ahmad ibn Tulun, who started out as an aide to the Governor of Egypt in 868 CE, soon made himself Governor and broke with the court in Baghdad. He conquered Palestine and Syria in 264 AH/878 CE, and Jerusalem became part of the province of Egypt. This government was later followed by that of the Ikhshidids from 327 AH/939 CE to 359 AH/969 CE.

Shortly after the Fatimids' conquest of Egypt, Palestine with Jerusalem came under their domination. It was during the reign of al-'Aziz (976-996 CE) that Christians and Jews in Jerusalem enjoyed considerable freedom. Then the Seljuks, an outlying branch of the Turks, who came from the far eastern provinces of Islam, close to the borders of China, overran Palestine and Syria and controlled the region except for a few months in 1076 CE when it was recovered by the Fatimids. Thus, Jerusalem lay under Seljuk rule from 1071 to 1098 CE.

In 1096 CE, the Crusaders engaged in a series of ostensibly religious wars, undertaken by the Christians of Western Europe for the recovery of Jerusalem and the Holy Land. It was the Holy Sepulchre in particular which caught the imagination of Pope Urban II, when he proclaimed the First Crusade. On the 6th June 1099 CE, the Crusaders laid siege to Jerusalem and assaulted the city for forty days until they finally took it on the 15th July,

whereupon thousands of Muslim, Christian and Jewish, men, women, and children were massacred. A golden cross was placed on top of the Dome of the Rock, which was renamed Templum Domini, and the al-Aqsa Mosque became Templum Solomonis. For about a century, the Holy City became the capital of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem. This Kingdom was to last eighty-seven years, during which time neither Jew nor Muslim was allowed to dwell within the walls of the city.

Meanwhile, Sultan Salah ad-Din (Saladin) gradually established a degree of religious and political harmony in the Islamic lands. On the 4th July 1187 CE, he defeated the Franks in the decisive battle of Hittin and, three months later, succeeded in capturing Jerusalem. On this occasion there was no bloodshed, no massacres, and those who wanted to leave were permitted to do so, with all their goods. Those who wanted to stay were guaranteed protection for their lives, property, and places of worship.

The first priority of the conquerors was al-Haram ash-Sharif. All the structural additions and decorations made by the Templars were removed. The Dome area was washed with rose-water, the mihrab of the al-Aqsa Mosque was renewed and plated with marble, the mimbar (pulpit) of Nur ad-Din was completed and safely transported from Damascus to be installed in the mosque. Salah ad-Din remained encamped on the Mount of Olives and stayed long enough to arrange the basic affairs of the city. Before he departed to Damascus, he appointed Diya' ad-Din 'Isa al-Hakkari as governor of the city.

Al-Quds now came under the Ayyubid dynasty and was ruled by Salah ad-Din's nephew al-Mu'azzam, the Sultan of Damascus. In 616 AH/1219 CE, he ordered the destruction of the city with the exception of the Haram area, the Holy Sepulchre, and the Citadel. His brother al-Kamil, the ruler of Egypt, concluding a treaty with Emperor Frederick II in order to protect himself from the Syrian Ayyubids, in 626 AH/1229 CE ceded the city of al-

Quds to Frederick for ten years, except for the Haram area. Thus, the city remained in the hands of Christians until 636 AH/1239 CE, when an-Nasir recaptured it, but he gave it away again in 641 AH/1243 CE. It was restored to Egyptian rule in 642 AH/1244 CE by Khwarizmian forces.

In 1260 CE, the Mongols occupied Damascus, after capturing and destroying Baghdad in 1258 CE and bringing to an end token Abbasid rule. But they were soon defeated by the Mamluk leader Qutuz, with the assistance of Baybars, in the battle of 'Ayn Jalut. The Mamluks then ruled Palestine until it was taken peacefully by the Ottomans in 922 AH/1516 CE.

The Mamluks handed to Selim I Yavuz the keys of al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock. Selim prostrated himself and exclaimed, 'Thanks be to Allah! I am now the possessor of the sanctuary of the first Qiblah.'

Under the Ottomans, the Jews enjoyed favourable treatment and flourished in Tiberias, Acre, Gaza, Hebron, Jerusalem, and Safed, a city on a hill in Galilee which became a significant centre of Jewish spiritual life and scholarly study, prior to the establishment of Jerusalem as a centre of Jewish scholarship.

Selim's son, Sulayman II Qanuni (the Lawgiver), known throughout Europe as Sulayman the Magnificent, restored and renewed all of Jerusalem, building walls, gates, towers, and aqueducts. His most remembered gift to Jerusalem was the breathtakingly beautiful tile work commissioned for the exterior of the Dome of the Rock. With the incomparable skills of Persian master ceramicists, 40,000 tiles were fired and put into place, crowned by the inscription of Surah 36 (Yasin). This was to celebrate the fact that Allah had made the Dome of the Rock the site of one of the Prophet's most remarkable spiritual experiences by making it a world landmark in sacred architecture.

Ottoman rule lasted for 400 years, but fell into decline and crum-

bled as they became threatened by external pressure from the European powers. During World War I (1914-1918), the Ottomans sided with Germany and Austria against the Allies, as a result of which, with the defeat of the Axis powers, the Ottoman Empire was broken up and divided into territories mandated to Britain and France.

In the Ottoman period there was a small but significant Jewish presence in Palestine. In the nineteenth century there were two main Jewish communities in Jerusalem, each hostile to the other. The Sephardim, who originated from Spain, formed the vast majority, while the other community, the Ashkenazim, recent arrivals from Prussia, Austria, Poland, and Russia, formed a small minority. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the Jewish population of Jerusalem could be divided religiously into three main groups: one promoting extreme adherence to the old way of life without changing anything; the second, the moderates, composed of practical people, tradesmen, and the like, who were devoted to religious tradition but willing to absorb new ideas; and the third, a more limited group of Maskilim who had been educated in Palestine or abroad, and new settlers who advocated revolutionary ideas.

European interest in Palestine began long before the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The first European consulate established in Jerusalem was the British in 1838, followed by the Prussian in 1842, the French in 1843, the Austrian in 1847, the Spanish in 1854, the American in 1856, and the Russian in 1857.

The Period of the British Mandate

On the 2nd November 1917, the British Government issued the Balfour Declaration, which referred in favourable terms to the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine in realisation of the Zionist ideal. The Zionist movement had been given its momentum by Herzl's proposal in 1896 for the establishment of a

Jewish state. Towards the end of the First World War, British troops under General Allenby entered Jerusalem. Ottoman rule came to an end and Palestine was placed under British mandatory control.

1920 saw a major clash in Jerusalem between Muslims and Jews, with many people killed on both sides. The Jewish community started to organize itself with an army (the Haganah) and the conflict recommenced between Muslims and Jews during 1928-9, when violence flared up at the Wailing Wall, resulting in the deaths of 113 Jews and 116 Muslims. On the Muslim side, Shaykh 'Izz ad-Din al-Qassam started to organize an armed struggle against the British and the Zionists, but he was killed in 1935. An Arab High Committee was established in Jerusalem under the leadership of Hajj Amin al-Husayni in order to continue the struggle.

In 1939, the British Government issued a White Paper limiting Jewish immigration to 75,000 persons over five years and stating that Palestine would become an independent state in ten years. This, however, was opposed by both Muslims and Jews, and the violent anti-government activities continued. Buildings in Jerusalem were blown up by the Haganah and Irgun, including the King David Hotel in July 1946.

In 1947, the British Government informed the United Nations that it could no longer govern the country and would terminate the mandate in May 1948, whereupon the United Nations General Assembly adopted by a two-thirds majority its famous partition resolution which recommended that two separate states would be created out of mandatory Palestine, one Jewish and the other Arab (Muslim and Christian). They recommended an international status for Jerusalem. Again both sides in the conflict rejected the proposal and in the ensuing conflict the Irgun massacred over 250 civilians in the Arab village of Deir Yassin on the 9th April 1948. On the 26th April, the Haganah launched

operation Jevussi against the population in Western Jerusalem, driving out all of the inhabitants by the 15th May 1948.

The State of Israel and the Struggle for Palestinian Independence

The British High Commissioner left the city and the Jewish forces entered Jerusalem. The Arab regimes from six neighbouring countries intervened, as did also the Muslim Brotherhood (*al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun*), to fight against the Zionists in Palestine. A truce was finally arranged and the country de facto divided. Jerusalem became a divided city, with the Old City (East Jerusalem) under Jordanian custodianship and the New City (West Jerusalem) under Israeli authority. The declaration of the State of Israel was publicly announced on 14th May 1948, and Jerusalem was made its capital on the 13th December 1949. But many major powers refused to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital, setting up their embassies and legations in Tel Aviv instead.

On the 5th June 1967, war broke out again between Israel on the one side and Egypt, Syria, and Jordan on the other side. The war raged for six intensive days of fighting (5th-11th June), at the end of which Israel gained control of Egypt's Sinai region, Syria's Golan heights, and Jordan's West bank, including East Jerusalem. The first major act of postwar destruction was the bulldozing of the Magharibah Quarter of Jerusalem next to the Wailing Wall, beginning on the 8th June and ending within a few days, by which time the district had been reduced to rubble. The Israeli authorities joined the two parts of Jerusalem, issued identity cards to the citizens of Jerusalem, and encouraged Jews to emigrate to the capital and to Israel as a whole. In response to this activity, the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution determining

'that all measures taken by Israel to change the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure, or status of the Palestinian and other Muslim or Chris-

tian territories occupied since 1967 including Jerusalem, or any part thereof, have no legal validity.'

On the 9th December 1987, the Intifada broke out in Gaza and the West Bank. On the 15th November 1988, the establishment of the State of Palestine on Palestinian territory, with its capital in Jerusalem, was proclaimed by the PLO, but the Israelis refused to countenance the idea of a Palestinian state. On the 31st October and the 1st November 1991, Palestinians and Israelis began talks about peace in Madrid under the supervision of the USA and USSR. These led eventually to the Oslo Accords under which a Palestinian National Authority with limited autonomy was established in Gaza and in parts of the West Bank.

Historical Appendix to Chapter 2

Chronology of the History of Quds

BCE

- 1800: The Jebusites (a Canaanite subgroup) are in occupation of Jerusalem.
- 1000-961: King Dawud makes Jerusalem his capital.
- 961-922: King Sulayman builds the First Temple.
- 587: Destruction of Jerusalem and the First Temple by Nebuchadnezzar and the exile of the Jews to Babylon.
- 537-332: Persian rule.
- 537: Return of Jews from exile.
- 515: Building of the Second Temple.
- 332-164: The Greek period.
- 164-163: The Hasmonaean State.
- 324-63 BCE: The Roman period.
- 63: Pompey captures Jerusalem.
- 37-34: King Herod the Great builds his palace and three towers, and starts to refurbish the Temple.

CE

- 70: Destruction of the Second Temple by Titus.

Chronology of the History of Quds

- 135: The Emperor Hadrian totally destroys Jerusalem and builds a new city, which he names Aelia Capitolina.
- 324-638: The Byzantine period.
- 326: Queen Helena visits Jerusalem and builds the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.
- 614: Persian conquest of Jerusalem.
- 629: Jerusalem recaptured by the Byzantines.
- 638-1099: The Muslim period.
- 638: The Caliph 'Umar enters Jerusalem.
- 1099-1187: The Crusader Kingdom (Latin Kingdom) of Jerusalem. 1187: Salah ad-Din captures Jerusalem from the Crusaders.
- 1517-1917: The Ottoman period.
- 1917: The Balfour Declaration, followed by General Allenby's entry into Jerusalem and British occupation.
- 1947: United Nations resolution recommending the partition of Palestine into two states.
- 1948: British mandate ended and the State of Israel proclaimed. 13th December 1949: The City of Jerusalem declared the capital of the State of Israel.
- June 1967: Six Day War: Israel occupies the West Bank.
- 21st July 1967: The burning of part of the al-Aqsa Mosque.
- 9th December 1987: Outbreak of the Intifada.

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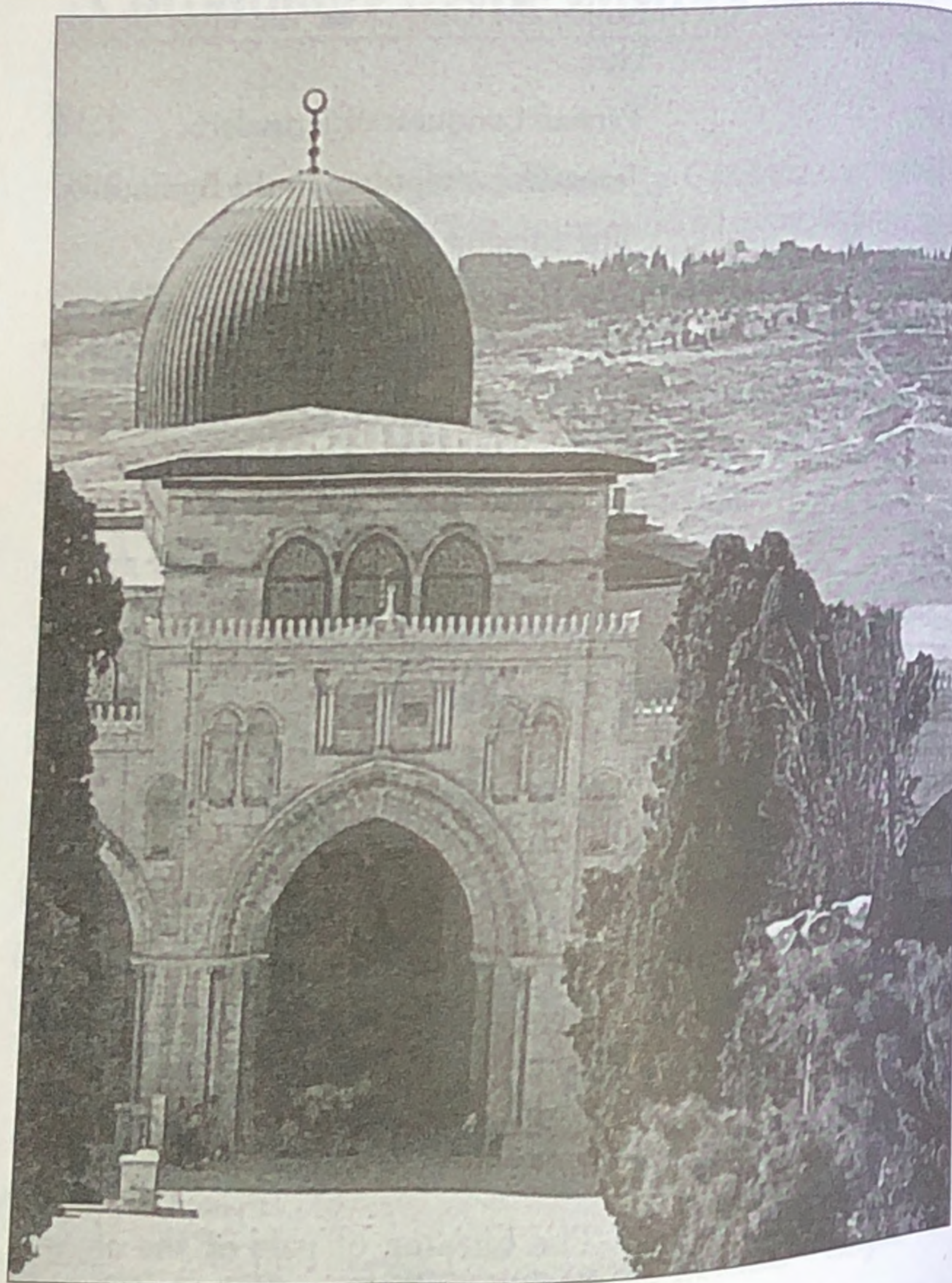
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Al-Quds

15th November 1988: Proclamation of the State of Palestine by the PLO.

18th October 1990: Massacre in the al-Aqsa Mosque.

31st October-1st November 1991: Peace talks in Madrid.



Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem

Chapter 3

The Sanctity of Jerusalem in Judaism

Holy Land

In the Hebrew Bible holiness is essentially a quality that belongs to God. It is a positive cultic or moral condition predicated of God, of people, of places and of time. For people it may be an inherent condition or one achieved through ritual means. It is defined on the one hand as that which is consistent with God and His character, and on the other as that which is threatened by impurity. That which is holy belongs in a special way to God and must be approached with caution. The Holy Land in Jewish tradition signifies the land promised by God to Abraham and his descendants, that would one day be restored to the Jewish people.

The holiness of the land is to be respected in a variety of ways: by observing the boundaries, both spatial and temporal, between the holy and the profane and by avoidance of religious and social customs of neighbouring peoples. The idea of holiness is extended to the Land of Israel because it is the possession of God, or selected by God, or because God's presence is believed perpetually to reside in the Land.

Within the Holy Land itself there are degrees of holiness. This concept, already implicit in the Hebrew Bible, receives its clearest formulation in Mishnah tractate Kelim (1:1-6). There ten degrees of holiness are delimited. In ascending order they are:

The (1) Land of Israel, (2) the Walled Cities, (3) the Temple, (4) the Rampart, (5) the Court of Women, (6) the

Court of Israel, (7) the Court of the Priests, (8) between the Porch and the Altar, (9) the Sanctuary and the (10) Holy of Holies.

There are ten degrees of holiness. The land of Israel is holier than any other land. Wherein lies its holiness? In that from it they may bring the *omer*, the first fruits, and the two loaves, which they may not bring from any other land. The walled cities (of the land of Israel) are still more holy, in that they must send forth the lepers from their midst. Moreover, they may carry around a corpse therein where-soever they will, but once it is gone forth (from the city) they may not bring it back. Within the wall (of Jerusalem) is still more holy, for there (only) they may eat the lesser holy things, and the second tithe. The Temple Mount is still more holy, for no man or woman that has a flux, no menstruant, and no woman after childbirth may enter therein. The Rampart is still more holy, for no gentiles and none that have contracted uncleanness from a corpse may enter therein. The Court of the Women is still more holy, for none that had immersed himself the self same day (because of uncleanness) may enter therein, yet none would thereby become liable to a sin-offering. The Court of the Israelites is still more holy, for none whose atone-ment is yet incomplete may enter therein, and they would thereby become liable to a sin-offering. The Court of the Priests is still more holy, for Israelites may not enter therein save only when they must perform the laying on of hands, slaughtering, and waving. Between the Porch and the Altar is still more holy, for none that has a blemish or whose hair is unloosed may enter there. The Sanctuary is still more holy, for none may enter therein with hands and feet unwashed. The Holy of Holies is still more holy, for none may enter therein save only the High Priest on the Day of Atonement at the time of the (Temple) service.

This text offers a model for organising space into a coherent pattern. The model works from the outside inwards. Israel is contrasted with the rest of the world, Jerusalem is contrasted with the other cities of the Land, the Temple is contrasted with Jerusalem and the Holy of Holies is contrasted with the Temple. The text represents space as consisting of progressively smaller opposing domains. Each ring of the set of concentric circles is qualitatively compared in terms of holiness with its two adjoining rings.

The structure of the sacred geography is presented in Figure 3.1

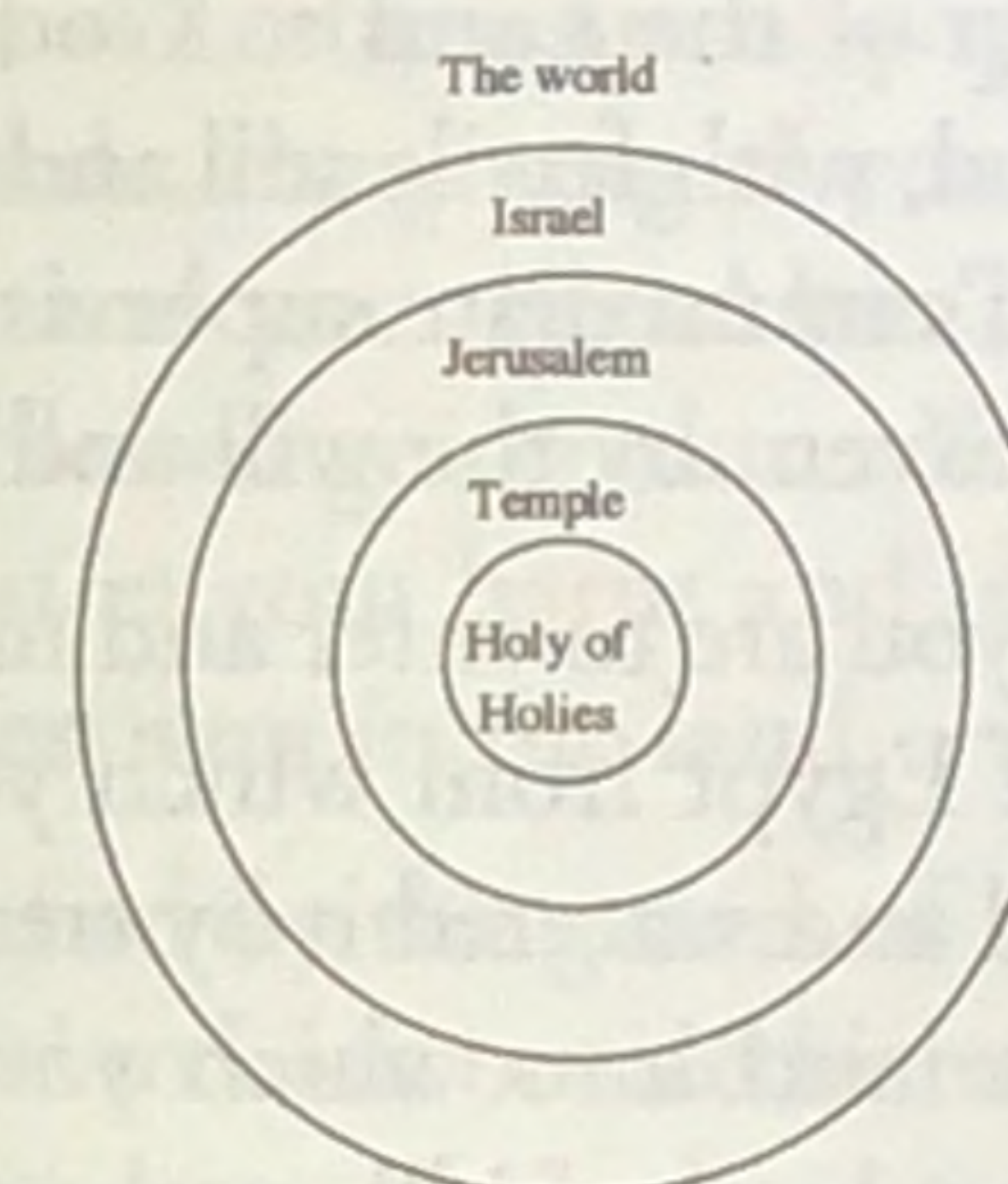


Figure 3.1

At the micro-level of the Temple an association is established between space and humanity. All people can enter the Temple, yet as we move inwards within the Temple the groups of people who are allowed to enter are progressively reduced. This can be represented by Figure 3.2:

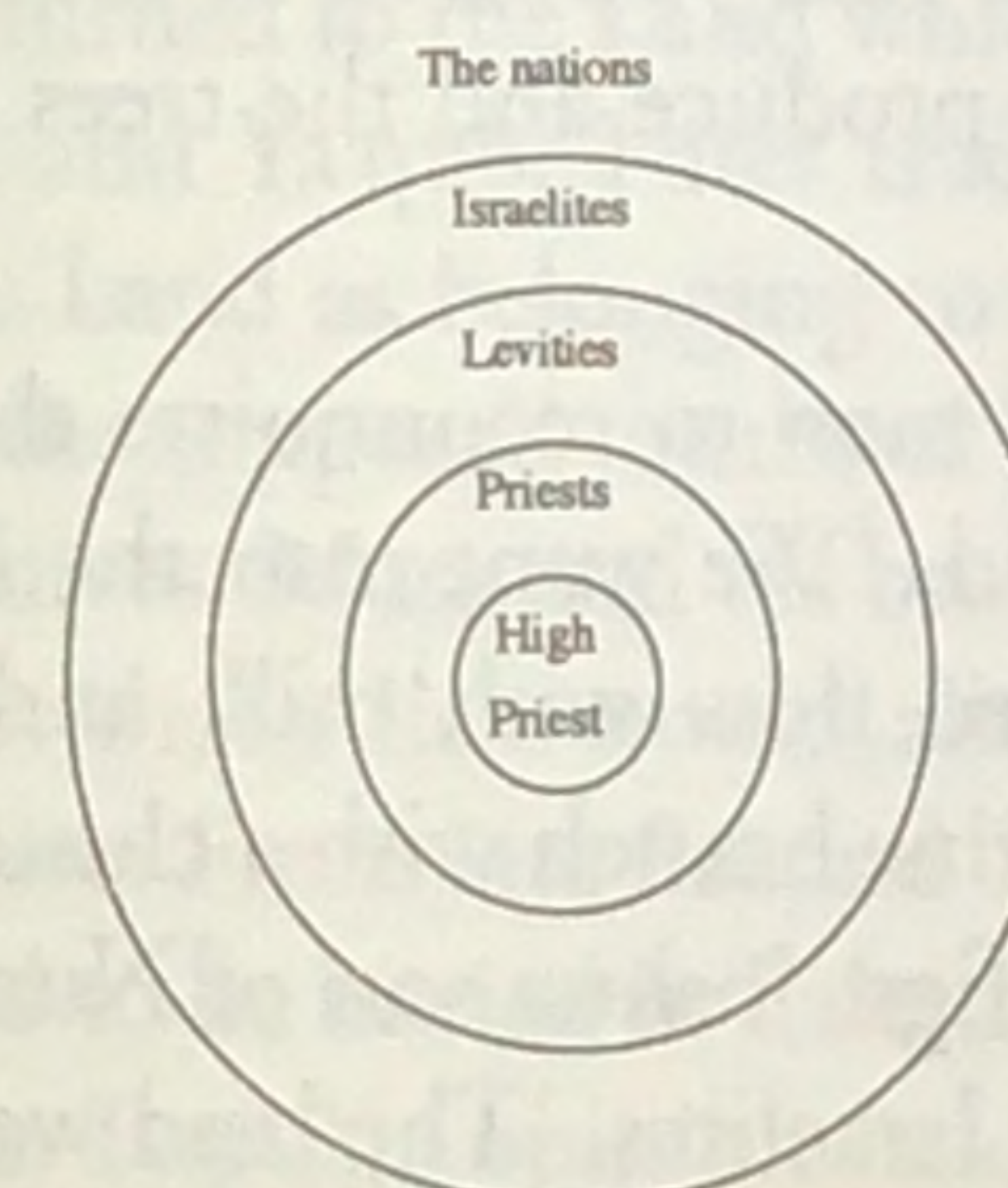


Figure 3.2

In each case in reference to the Land – the Walled Cities of the Land, the wall of Jerusalem, the Temple Mount, the Rampart, the Court of Women, the Court of Israel – it is the connection with an enactment of the law that determines the degree of holiness. The general idea is that the Land gains its sanctity because the law is observed in it. For Jews, sanctity is only fully possible within the Land. Outside the Land only strictly personal laws can be fulfilled, that is the moral law, sexual law, Sabbath law, circumcision and dietary laws. Of necessity, outside the Land, the territorial laws have to be neglected.

The special relationship of the Land to God, means that it is a Land particularly blessed, with fertile soil and abundant harvests. Since it was under God's immediate supervision its soil received its water direct from heaven, by the will and decision of God:

For the land which you are to enter and make your own is not like the land of Egypt from which you came, where you sowed your seed and watered it by tread, like a vegetable garden. No, the land into which you are to cross to make it your own is a land of hills and valleys watered by the rain from heaven. Yahweh your God takes care of this land. The eyes of Yahweh your God are on it always from the year's beginning to its end.

God is said to have blessed the Holy Land by making it fertile:

'I will give you the rain you need at the right time. The earth shall give its produce and the trees of the countryside their fruits.'

When Musa sent out men to reconnoitre the land of Canaan, they returned and said, 'We went into the land to which you sent us. It does indeed flow with milk and honey,' and they brought with them a vine branch with a cluster of grapes, as well as pomegranates and figs. Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh said to the Israelites, 'The land we went to reconnoi-

tre is a good land, an excellent land. If Yahweh is pleased with us, he will lead us into this land and give it to us. It is a land where milk and honey flow.' God promised the incoming Israelites blessings in their cities, country, soil and cattle, if they obeyed His commandments:

Yahweh your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. All the blessings that follow shall come up with you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of Yahweh your God. You will be blessed in the town and blessed in the country. Blessed will be the fruit of your body, the produce of your soil, the issue of your livestock, the increase of your cattle, the young of your flock. Blessed will be your panner and your bread bin. Blessed will you be coming in, and blessed going out... Yahweh will summon a blessing for you in your barns and in all your undertakings, and will bless you in the land.

The land was sanctified by the graves of the prophets and patriarchs. Ibrahim is said to have buried his wife Sarah in the cave of Machpelah in the country of Canaan, and Ibrahim himself was later said to have been buried in the same cave. Ishaq and his wife Rebekah were also said to have been buried there, and Ya'qub instructed his sons to bury him in the same place where his father and grandfather had been buried in the Holy Land. Ya'qub's son Yusuf similarly requested his brothers to take his bones with them when they returned to the Land which God had promised to Ibrahim, Ishaq, and Ya'qub. Later tradition was to identify many graves in the Land as belonging to the prophets and the patriarchs, such as the supposed tombs of Zakariyya and Haggai on the Mount of Olives. Musa and his brother Harun were frustrated in their wish that Allah would allow them to enter the holy land to die there. From late Second Temple times onwards many Jews arranged to be buried in Palestine, seeking thereby to atone for their sins. Popular opinion held that the dead of the

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Land of Israel would be the first to be resurrected in the days of the Messiah, and the first to enjoy the years of the Messiah, while those buried outside the land were accounted to have died an additional death on account of their being outside the Land.

God required Israel to obey his commandments and observe them, warning that if they failed to do so, they would be forbidden to live in the Land:

This testimony is written concerning you, so that you might keep it always, lest you ever eat any blood of the beasts or birds or cattle throughout all of the days of the earth. And the man who eats the blood of the beasts or cattle or birds throughout all the days of the earth shall be uprooted, he and his seed from the earth.

Again, circumcision has direct relevance to possession of the land:

'Command the sons of Israel and let them keep this sign of covenant for their generations for an eternal ordinance. And they will not be uprooted from the land.'

References to the Land in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha add little to the canonical references in the Hebrew Bible. The concept of the Holy Land appears in 2 Baruch: 'And the holy land will have mercy on its own and will protect its inhabitants at that time;' and again in the Sibylline Oracles: 'And you will surely flee, leaving the very beautiful Temple, since it is your fate to leave the holy plain.' It is elsewhere referred to as 'the goodly land' ('... and they will be carried captive from the goodly land'), or as 'the beautiful and glorious land' ('and that house was in their midst in the beautiful land').

In the Letter of Aristeas, the extent and beauty of the land is noted: 'The terrain is ample and beautiful.' The term 'blessed place' occurs in 1 Enoch. In his cosmographical account of his world tour, Enoch says: "I was transported to the middle of the earth, and I saw a blessed place, in which were trees and saplings

surviving and burgeoning from a felled tree. And there I saw a holy mountain." The "blessed place" here, as in 1 Enoch 27:1, is the land of Israel, and the place at the centre of the earth is Jerusalem, an unmistakable topography of which follows, though in keeping with the fictional setting of the narrative the name Jerusalem itself is not used.

The most remarkable text from the Pseudepigrapha on the Land of Israel and on Jerusalem is Jubilees 8:10; 9:15, which gives an account of the division of the earth among the sons of Nuh after the Flood and which relates Jerusalem and the Land of Israel spatially to the rest of the habitable world. We shall discuss this text further below (see under and also Fig. 5).

For the Community of the Dead Sea Scrolls the Land was of immense importance. It was a holy land which had been defiled because the Temple, where sacrifice was offered to atone for the sins of Israel, was in the hands of an illegitimate priesthood who conducted its affairs according to an ungodly code of practice. The result was that the Temple and the Land were polluted and in need of radical purification. The Community had withdrawn from Jerusalem and from worship in the Temple to the borders of the Land, there to await the final great conflict which would pit them as Sons of Light against the ungodly, the Sons of Darkness, and result in the cleansing of the Land and the restoration of its holiness. For the Community there was an absolute duty placed upon Jews to 'abstain from all evil and hold fast to all good, that they may practise truth, righteousness and justice in the Land'. Their own strict observance of the Law acted as an atonement for the Land, in the absence of an effective Temple cult. The Council of the Community is characterised in the following terms: 'In the Council of the Community there shall be twelve men and three priests, perfectly versed in all that is revealed of the law, whose works shall be truth, righteousness, justice, loving kindness and humility. They shall preserve the faith

in the Land with steadfastness and meekness and shall atone for sin by the practice of justice and by suffering the sorrows of affliction'. The text continues:

When these are in Israel, the Council of the Community shall be established in truth. It shall be an Everlasting Plantation, a House of Holiness for Israel, an Assembly of Supreme Holiness for Aaron. They shall be witnesses to the truth at the Judgment, and shall be the elect of goodwill who shall atone for the Land, and pay to the wicked their reward.'

And in a parallel passage we read:

'When these become members of the Community in Israel according to all these rules, they shall establish the spirit of holiness according to everlasting truth. They shall atone for guilty rebellion and for sins of unfaithfulness that they may obtain loving kindness for the Land without the flesh of holocausts and the fat of sacrifices.'

At Qumran human conduct was viewed as having a direct relationship to the fate of the Land. Sin leads God to hide his face from the Land: 'He hid his face from the Land until they were consumed.' The words of Isaiah 24:17, 'Terror and the pit and the snare are upon you, O inhabitants of the Land', are applied to the condition of the Land abandoned by God on account of the sin of the people. Sin removes 'the boundary with which the forefathers marked out their inheritance' and exposes the Land to attack from its enemies.

Rabbinic sources stress the idea that the link between Israel and the Land is the will and purpose of God. The Land is God's gift to Israel. Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai commenced a discourse with the words of the prophet Habakkuk, 'He rose and measured the land', and then commented:

The Holy One, blessed be He, considered all generations

and He found no generation fitted to receive the Torah other than the generation of the wilderness. The Holy One, blessed be He, considered all mountains and found no mountain on which the Torah should be given other than Sinai. The Holy One, blessed be He, considered all cities and found no city wherein the Temple might be built, other than Jerusalem. The Holy One, blessed be He, considered all lands and found no land suitable to be given to Israel, other than the land of Israel.

But the Land has to be merited and to be earned. The Babylonian Talmud suggests that it is merited through suffering: 'It has been taught that Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai says: The Holy One, blessed be he, gave Israel three precious gifts, and all of them were given only through suffering. These are the Torah, the Land of Israel and the world to come.' According to the Mishnah it is observance of the laws of the Land (i.e. the agricultural and civil laws) that result in the gift of 'life in the Land':

Any religious duty that does not depend on the Land (of Israel) may be observed anywhere in the Land or outside of it, and any religious duty that depends on the Land may be observed in the Land (alone), excepting the laws of *orlah*-fruit and of diverse kinds. R. Eliezer says: Also the law of new produce. If a man performs but a single commandment it shall be well with him and he shall have length of days and shall inherit the Land, but if he neglects a single commandment it shall be ill with him and he shall not have length of days and shall not inherit the Land. He that has a knowledge of Scripture and Mishnah and right conduct will not soon fall into sin, for it is written, And a threefold cord is not quickly broken (Eccles. 4. 12). But he that has no knowledge of Scripture and Mishnah and right conduct has no part in the habitable world.

The Jerusalem Talmud advances the idea that Israel has a legal

right to the Land, so long as it continues to assert its claim to the Land: 'Though soil cannot be stolen, a man can forfeit his right to this soil by giving up hope of ever regaining it.' The remembrance of the Land and of the Temple forms a central element of the Jewish liturgy. Mishnah Berakhot 4:1ff stipulates a perpetual remembrance of Jerusalem and of the Land. The Shemoneh 'Esreh, recited obligatorily morning and evening, at times corresponding to the morning and evening sacrifices in the Temple, contains the following benedictions:

Benediction 14

Be merciful, O Lord our God, in Thy great mercy, towards Israel Thy people, and towards Jerusalem Thy city, and towards Zion the abiding place of Thy glory, and towards Thy Temple and Thy habitation, and towards the kingdom of the house of David, Thy righteous anointed one. Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of David, the builder of Jerusalem.

Benediction 16

Accept us, O Lord our God, and dwell in Zion, and may Thy servants serve Thee in Jerusalem. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, whom in reverent fear we serve.

Benediction 18

Bestow Thy peace upon Israel Thy people, and upon Thy city, and upon Thine inheritance, and bless us, all of us together. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who makes peace.

Prayer is made facing towards Jerusalem. Hence Mishnah Berakhot 4:5 states the opinion of Rabbi Joshua that:

If [a man] was riding on an ass [when the time for the prayer is upon him] he should dismount [to say the Tefillah]. If he cannot dismount he should turn his face [toward Jerusalem] and if he cannot turn his face, he should

direct his heart toward the Holy of Holies.

The blowing of the shofar at New Year recalls the blowing of the shofar in the Jerusalem Temple:

If a festival-day of the new year fell on a Sabbath, they might blow the shofar in the Holy City but not in the provinces. After the Temple was destroyed Rabban Yohanan ibn Zakkai ordained that they might blow it wheresoever there was a court. R. Eliezer said: Rabban Yohanan ibn Zakkai ordained it as only for Yabneh. They replied: It is all one whether it was Yabneh or any other place wherein was a court.

Other elements of the Jewish liturgy also commemorate the loss of the Land. At the Fast of the 9th of Av the destruction of the Temple is mourned. At the conclusion of a Jewish wedding service a prayer for Jerusalem is recited: 'May she who was barren [Zion] be exceeding glad and exult, when her children are gathered within her in joy. Blessed art thou, O lord, who makes Zion joyful through her children.' This is followed by the breaking of a glass by the bridegroom in remembrance of the destruction of Jerusalem. Jerusalem is also remembered daily after meals. The prayers spoken then include the following words: 'Have mercy, O Lord our God, upon Israel thy people, upon Jerusalem thy city, upon Zion the abiding place of thy glory, upon the kingdom of the House of David thine anointed, and upon the great and holy House that is called by Thy name.' It is a fact that the people of Israel have never for a moment given up their attachment to the Land of Israel and Jerusalem, or relinquished their claim to it, which forms the basis for many Jews of their right to return to and repossess the Land.

The Promised Land

One of the major concepts of the Hebrew Bible is the concept of a covenant between God and man. The Hebrew Bible recog-

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nizes two major covenants. First there was the covenant made with Nuh after the Flood, by which God promised never again to destroy the whole earth by overwhelming it with water. This was God's general covenant with all mankind. Second, there was the covenant which God made with Ibrahim, by which He promised the Land to Ibrahim's descendants. This covenant was renewed in the covenant which God made with Musa on Mount Sinai, when the Israelites were given the Ten Commandments as the basic rules for living.

The promise of land was absolutely central to the covenant with Ibrahim. God appeared to Ibrahim in Ur of the Chaldees and commanded him as follows: 'Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee.' Ibrahim migrated westwards and finally the land which God had intended for him was revealed to him:

And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Shechem, unto the plain of Moreh, and the Canaanite was then in the land. And the Lord appeared unto Abram and said, 'Unto thy seed I will give this land,' and there he built an altar unto the Lord, who appeared to him.

God reaffirmed his covenant with Ibrahim, and its promise of land, when he and Lut parted company from each other, and Lut went into the lowlands of the Jordan. God said to Ibrahim:

Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward, for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever, and I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth, so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it, for I will give it unto thee. Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the Lord.

The borders of this promised land were later defined more precisely:

In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed I have given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates – the land of the Kenites, and the Kennizites, and the Kadmonites, and the Hittites, and the Perrizites, and the Rephaites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.

At the time of God's covenant with Ibrahim, with its promise of a land, Ibrahim had no children, though God said that his seed would multiply to cover the earth and that he would become the father of many nations. Ibrahim had intercourse with Hagar, and from this union a son Isma'il was born. Ibrahim was eighty-six years old when Hagar gave birth to Isma'il. To Ibrahim, now an old man of ninety-nine years, God spoke once more: 'I am Almighty God; walk before me and be perfect ... I will bless Sarah and give you a son also from her. You shall call his name Isaac and I will establish an everlasting covenant with him and his seed after him.' In fact, both of Ibrahim's sons were blessed by God, who promised that nations would arise from each of them: 'In Isaac shall your seed be called,' Ibrahim was assured, 'But of the son of the bondwoman, I will also make a nation, because he is your seed. I will make him a great nation.' Once again the covenant between God and Ibrahim was reaffirmed:

I will establish my covenant between me and between thee and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee, and I will give unto thee and to thy seed after thee the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.

When God appeared to Ishaq, no specific promise was made to him of land, but rather that he would be blessed with progeny:

'And he (Isaac) went up to Beersheba and the Lord appeared to him the same night and said, I am the God of Abraham thy father; fear not, for I am with thee, and I will bless thee and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake. However, the promise of land is later mentioned when God appears to Ya'qub in his dream:

Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran, and he lighted upon a certain place and tarried there all night, because the sun was set, and he took the stones of that place and put them for his pillow, and lay down in that place to sleep, and he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven, and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it, and behold the Lord stood above it and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father and the God of Isaac. The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it and to thy seed.

This promise was later repeated to Ya'qub when God said to him, 'I am God Almighty, be fruitful and multiply. A nation and a company of nations shall come out of thy loins, and the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it and to thy seed after thee will I give the land.'

When God commanded Musa to go and bring the Children of Israel out of Egypt, the promised deliverance from slavery involved entry into 'a land flowing with milk and honey':

'I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. And the Lord said, 'I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows, and I am come down to deliver them out of the land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey, unto the place

of the Canaanites, the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites and Hivites, and the Jebusites.'

Later Musa's mission is implicitly linked to the covenant with the Patriarchs:

'And I have also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers. And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant. Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, "I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burden of the Egyptians, and I will rid you of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm and with great judgment, and I will take you to Me for a people, and I will be to you a God, and you shall know that I am the Lord your God who bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.'

So the Israelites left Egypt, made their covenant with God at Mount Sinai, and entered the Promised Land under the leadership of Joshua. The conquest of the Land was not, in fact, completed till the time of King Dawud, who made Israel one of the political powers of the region, conquering not only the whole of Canaan, but Ammon and Moab and a large part of Syria. The reign of Dawud and his son Sulayman marked the high point in Israelite possession of the Promised Land.

After Sulayman's death, his kingdom divided. The northern kingdom of Israel was overrun by the Assyrians, its capital Samaria destroyed and many of its inhabitants exiled in 722 BCE. The southern kingdom of Judah suffered a similar fate at the hands of the Babylonians in 586 BCE. There was a partial return to the southern kingdom in 538 BCE, but the little state of Judah was a weak and politically insignificant part of the Persian empire. It was incorporated by Alexander into the Greek empire and after

his death finally came under the control of the Seleucids. Led by the Hasmonaeans the Jews achieved for a brief period independence and considerable political power, but they were incorporated into the Roman empire by the Roman general Pompey in 63 BCE, and, despite rebellions in 66-74 and 132-135 CE, never again achieved independence.

Thus the strong promises contained in the covenant that Israel would possess the Land, and, implicitly, would enjoy freedom from foreign domination, were apparently only achieved for a brief period under Dawud and Sulayman. The reigns of Dawud and Sulayman were, in later times, looked back to nostalgically, as the golden age of Israel's history, and the expectation grew that the conditions of Dawud's reign would be restored to Israel, under a descendant of the House of Dawud, the Messiah, at the end of history.

The wording of the covenant seemed, on the face of it, to imply that the promise of the Land was unconditional. But the experience of history suggested that the promise was, in fact, conditional, and depended on Israel keeping its side of the bargain, and observing the law of Allah.

This point was already made within the tradition in the story of the generation of the wilderness. The Israelites in the wilderness rebelled and disobeyed Allah, worshipping the golden calf. They were unwilling to accept the leadership of Musa and refused to fight for their inheritance. In effect they said, 'Turn out the enemy first and then we shall enter into possession.' For this arrogance Allah punished them by making them wander in the wilderness for forty years, and by refusing to let them inherit the Promised Land:

The Lord replied, '... not one of the men who saw My glory and the miraculous signs I performed in Egypt and in the desert, but who disobeyed Me and tested Me ten times – not one of them will ever see the land I promised

on oath to their forefathers ... except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun. As for your children that you said would be taken as plunder, I will bring them in to enjoy the land you have rejected. But you – your bodies will fall in the desert.'

The conditional nature of the promise of the Land is stated explicitly at a number of places:

'But if ye will not hearken unto Me, and will not do all these commandments, and if ye will despise My statutes, or if your soul abhor My judgments, so that ye will not obey My commandments, but that ye break My covenant, I will also do this unto you, and I will appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart of heart, and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it, and I will set My face against you and ye shall be slain before your enemies. They that hate you shall reign over you, and ye shall flee when none pursueth you ... I will chastise you seven times for your sins ... And upon them that are left alive of you I will send faintness into their hearts in the land of their enemies, and the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them, and they shall flee, as fleeing from a sword, and they shall fall when none pursueth.'

'But it shall come to pass, if you will not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes which I commanded thee this day, that all these curses shall come upon thee and overtake thee.'

'Just as all the good things which the Lord your God promised concerning you have been fulfilled for you, so the Lord will bring upon you all the evil things, until He has destroyed you from off this good land, which the Lord your God has given you. If you transgress the covenant and bow

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down to them, then the anger of the Lord will be kindled against you, and you shall perish quickly from off the good land, which He has given to you.'

The Jews were often reminded by the Hebrew prophets that they have no absolute title to the Land:

'Are ye not as the children of the Ethiopians unto Me, O children of Israel?' saith the Lord. 'Have I not brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir? Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from the face of the earth.'

The uncompromising nature of these threats was to some extent modified in the tradition by the doctrine of the saving remnant. According to this doctrine, Israel would never totally apostasise, and so the promises of the covenant would never totally be annulled. There would always be a faithful few within Israel who would cling to the covenant and fulfil its stipulations, and they would form the nucleus of the restored Israel. With the growth of Messianic ideas in late Second Temple Judaism, there seems to have been a widespread belief in the inevitability of the restoration of the Jewish state, though in many texts the restoration was still linked to the requirement of keeping the Law: only if Israel repents and returns to observing the Law will the Messiah come.

Jews were often in conflict with their neighbours and there is evidence within Jewish tradition that they were from time to time challenged to justify their right to live in the Land of Israel. This is reflected, for example, in a passage in the Rabbinic commentary *Genesis Rabba*:

Rabbi Joshua commenced his exposition thus in the name of Rabbi Levi: 'The might of His deeds God revealed to His people, to give them the inheritance of the nations'

(Ps. 111:6). Why did the Holy One reveal to Israel what was created on the seven days of creation? It was so that the gentiles might not taunt Israel and say, 'You are nothing but a nation of robbers!' Israel can answer them, 'What of yourselves? Is there no robbery in your hands? Did not the Caphtorim come from Caphtor and destroy the Avvim (Deut. 2:23)? The world and its fullness belong to the Holy One. According to His good pleasure He gave it to you, and according to His good pleasure he took it from you and gave it to us. This is that which is written, "To give them the inheritance of the nations".'

The charge of brigandage and of usurpation of land was serious in the Roman world, and in this case the charge seemed to be backed by the Jews' own traditions, which spoke of the invasion and conquest of the Land under Joshua. Similar polemical concerns probably lie behind Jubilees' treatment of the Table of the Nations. There the Jews' title to the Land is established on two grounds:

First by international agreement. After the Flood the sons of Nuh divided up the world among themselves and agreed to abide by the territories assigned to them. The descendants of Sam (Shem in the Bible) were assigned the Land of Israel, so in international law they had a right to it. That land was usurped by Kan'an (Canaan in the Bible), a son of Ham, who had been assigned a patrimony elsewhere, in north Africa.

Second, the Land of Israel was assigned to the sons of Sam by drawing lots. What this meant was that it was divinely granted, since lots were seen as a means of discovering the will of God. The *Genesis Apocryphon* from Qumran, working within the tradition of the Jubilees' world map, reaffirms the Jews' title to the Land by having Ibrahim walk round its borders:

And I, Abram, departed to travel about and see the land. I began my journey at the river Gihon and travelled along

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And I, Abram, departed to travel about and see the land. I began my journey at the river Gihon and travelled along

the coast of the Sea until I came to the Mountain of the Bull (Taurus). Then I travelled from the coast of the Great Salt Sea and journeyed towards the east by the Mountain of the Bull, across the breadth of the land, until I came to the river Euphrates. I journeyed along the Euphrates until I came to the Red Sea (Persian Gulf) in the east, and I travelled along the coast of the Red Sea until I came to the tongue of the Sea of Reeds (the modern Red Sea), which flows out from the Red Sea. Then I pursued my way to the south until I came to the river Gihon, and returning, I came to my house in peace and found all things prosperous there. I went to dwell at the Oaks of Mamre, which is at Hebron, northeast of Hebron; and I built an altar there, and laid on it a sacrifice and an oblation to the Most High God.

That Allah promised the Land to the Jews as part of His covenant with them is accepted in Islamic tradition, but there the emphasis is on the conditional nature of that promise. The Jews are held up as a historical example of what happens to people who disobey Allah. The missions of Ibrahim and of Musa are seen as directed towards mankind as a whole, rather than towards a single people. Ibrahim's mission is described in the following terms:

And remember when Ibrahim was tried by his Lord with certain words, which he fulfilled completely. He said: 'I will make you an Imam for mankind.' He said: 'And also (Imams) from my offspring!' He answered: 'But My contract does not reach to wrongdoers.' (Surat al-Baqarah, 123)

And Musa, when commissioned in the Qur'an, is commissioned first and foremost to establish prayer. No mention is made of the Land:

Has the story of Musa reached you? When he saw a fire, so he said to his family, 'Wait here; I perceive a fire; perhaps I can bring you a burning brand from it, or find some guid-

ance at the fire.' But when he came to it, he was called: 'Musa! Truly, I am your Lord! Therefore (in My presence) take off your sandals: you are in the sacred valley Tuwa. I have chosen you: listen to what is revealed. Truly, I am Allah: there is no god but I: so worship Me (only), and establish the prayer for My remembrance ...' (Surah Ta-Ha, 8-13)

The disobedience of the Israelites in the wilderness is noted:

'The land will be forbidden to them for forty years during which they will wander aimlessly about the earth. (Surat al-Ma'idah, 28)

And again:

When it is said to them, 'Believe in what Allah revealed,' they say, 'We believe in what was revealed to us': yet they reject all besides, even though it is the Truth confirming what they have. Say: 'Why have you killed the prophets of Allah in times gone by, if are truly believers?' Musa brought you the clear signs; yet you worshipped the Calf (even) after him, and were wrongdoers. And remember when We took your Covenant and We raised above you (the towering height) of Mount (Sinai), (saying): 'Hold firmly to what We have given you and listen (to the Law).' They said: 'We hear, and we disobey': and they had to drink into their hearts (of the taint) of the Calf, because of their disbelief. Say: 'Evil indeed is that which your faith tells you to do, if you are believers!' (Surat al-Baqarah, 90-92)

The Land is for those who believe in Allah and the inheritance for those who enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong:

You are the best nation produced for mankind. You enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah. (Surah Ali 'Imran, 110)

Jerusalem as the Centre and Navel of the Earth

The special character of Jerusalem is also asserted in Jewish tradition through the claim that Jerusalem is the navel of the earth. Traditionally this idea has been linked to the words of Ezekiel in which he prophesies that at the end of days Gog (said to be Yajuj), of the land of Magog (said to be Majuj), will attack the Jewish exiles who have returned to the Land and who dwell in security on the hills of Israel, by advancing against those who 'dwell in the middle (*tabbur*) of the Land (or of the earth)'. The Greek version translates the word *tabbur* here as *omphalos*, but this rendering is probably not correct. The general geographical centrality of Jerusalem is asserted in vague ways from time to time in early Jewish tradition. Ezekiel says: 'Thus says the Lord God: I have set her [Jerusalem] in the midst of the nations, and countries are round about her'. And, as we noted earlier, Enoch visited the site of Jerusalem which he described as being 'the centre of the earth'. We also noted earlier the passage from Mishnah Kelim 1:6-9, which expressed strongly the centrality of Jerusalem through a map based on concentric circles of holiness. But the first clear and unequivocal assertion that Jerusalem is the navel of the earth is found in the second century BCE work known as the Book of Jubilees, in its account of the division of the world among the sons of Nuh:

And he [Noah] knew that the garden of Eden is the holy of Holies and the Lord's dwelling place, and Mount Sinai the centre of the desert, and Mount Zion the centre of the navel of the earth: these three were created as holy places facing each other"

The concept of the centre or navel of the earth plays an important role in many religious world views and is associated with an impressive and remarkably consistent set of mythological ideas. In Jubilees it may have political overtones: it may be meant to challenge the claim of the Greeks that the great Greek national

shrine of Delphi, which held a position in Greek religion similar to that of the Jerusalem Temple in Judaism, was the 'navel' (*omphalos*) of the world. So too in Muslim tradition, Makkah and the more specifically the Ka'bah, are regarded as the centre of the earth. This notion is linked to the Qur'anic verse which states:

'Like that We revealed to you an Arabic Qur'an: that you may warn the Mother of Cities [Makkah] and all around her.' (Surat ash-Shura, 7)

Ibn Kathir and others explain the expression 'mother of cities' (*umm al-qura*) as meaning that Makkah is in the centre of the world. Recently the Egyptian geographer Hussein Kamal al-Deen attempted to prove scientifically that this is, in fact, the case. See his map reproduced as Figure 3.5.

In keeping with early ideas of embryology, Jerusalem, as the navel of the earth, was seen as the first-created place, the point from which the rest of the world grew. God was envisaged as creating the world in the same manner as a child is formed in its mother's womb. Just as a child begins to grow from its navel and then develops into its full form, so the world began from its central point and developed outwards in all directions. This idea is most clearly expressed in Rabbinic literature:

As the navel is in the middle of the person, so is the Land of Israel the navel of the world, as it is written, 'That dwell in the navel of the earth' (Ezekiel 38:12). The Land of Israel is located in the centre of the world, Jerusalem in the centre of the Land of Israel, the Temple in the centre of Jerusalem, the *heikhal* in the centre of the Temple, the ark in the centre of the *heikhal* and in front of the *heikhal* is the even *shetiyyah* from which the world was founded.'

The mysterious even *shetiyyah*, was, apparently, commonly identified with the bare exposed piece of rock now enshrined in the Dome of the Rock. This stone was seen as the base of the whole

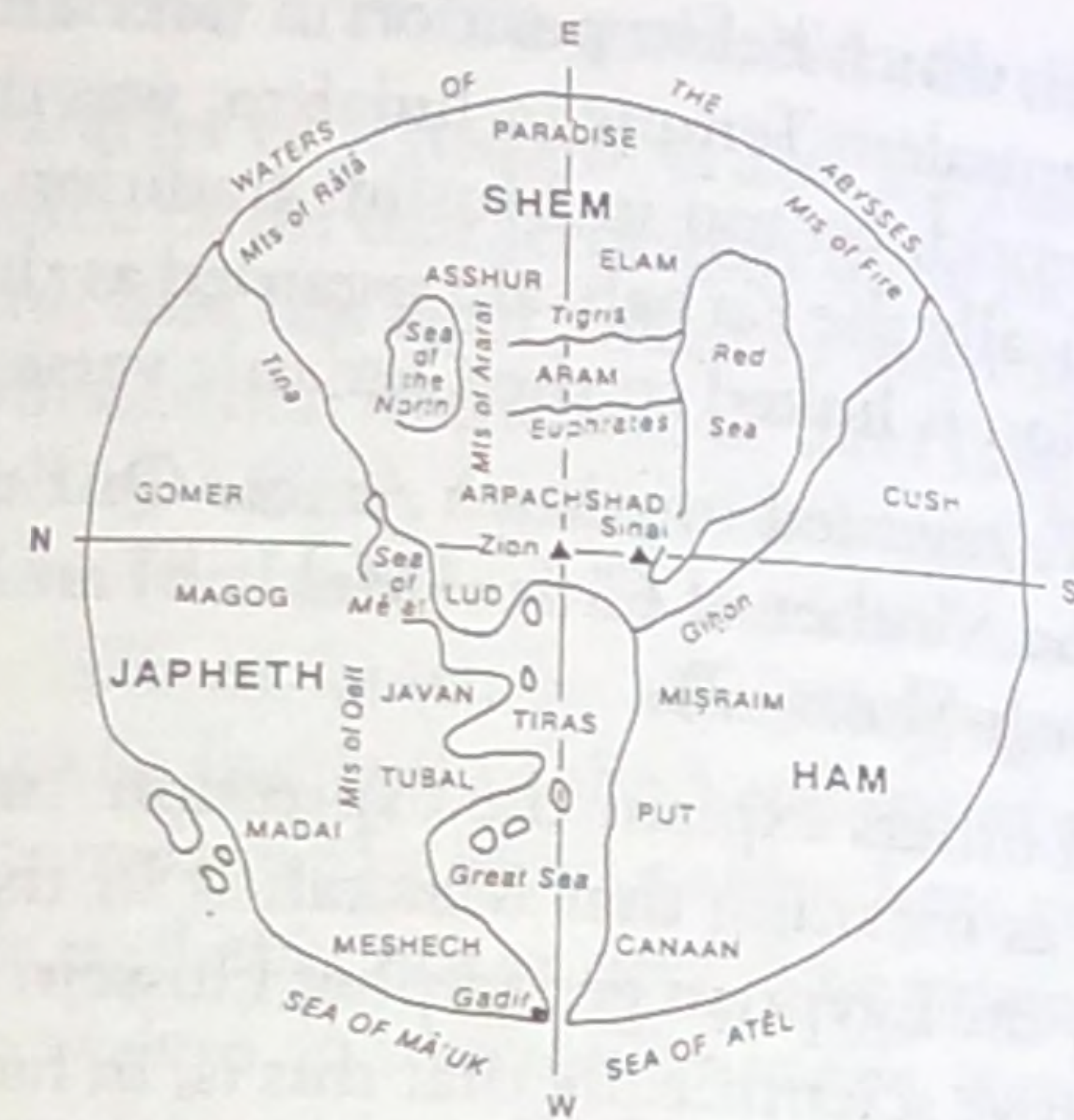


Figure 3.3: The Jubilees Mappa Mundi (after P.S. Alexander, Anchor Bible Dictionary, II, p. 982)



Figure 3.4 The Hereford Mappa Mundi (after the simplified hand-copy by K. Miller, Mappae Mundi, Heft IV, 1896, p.2)

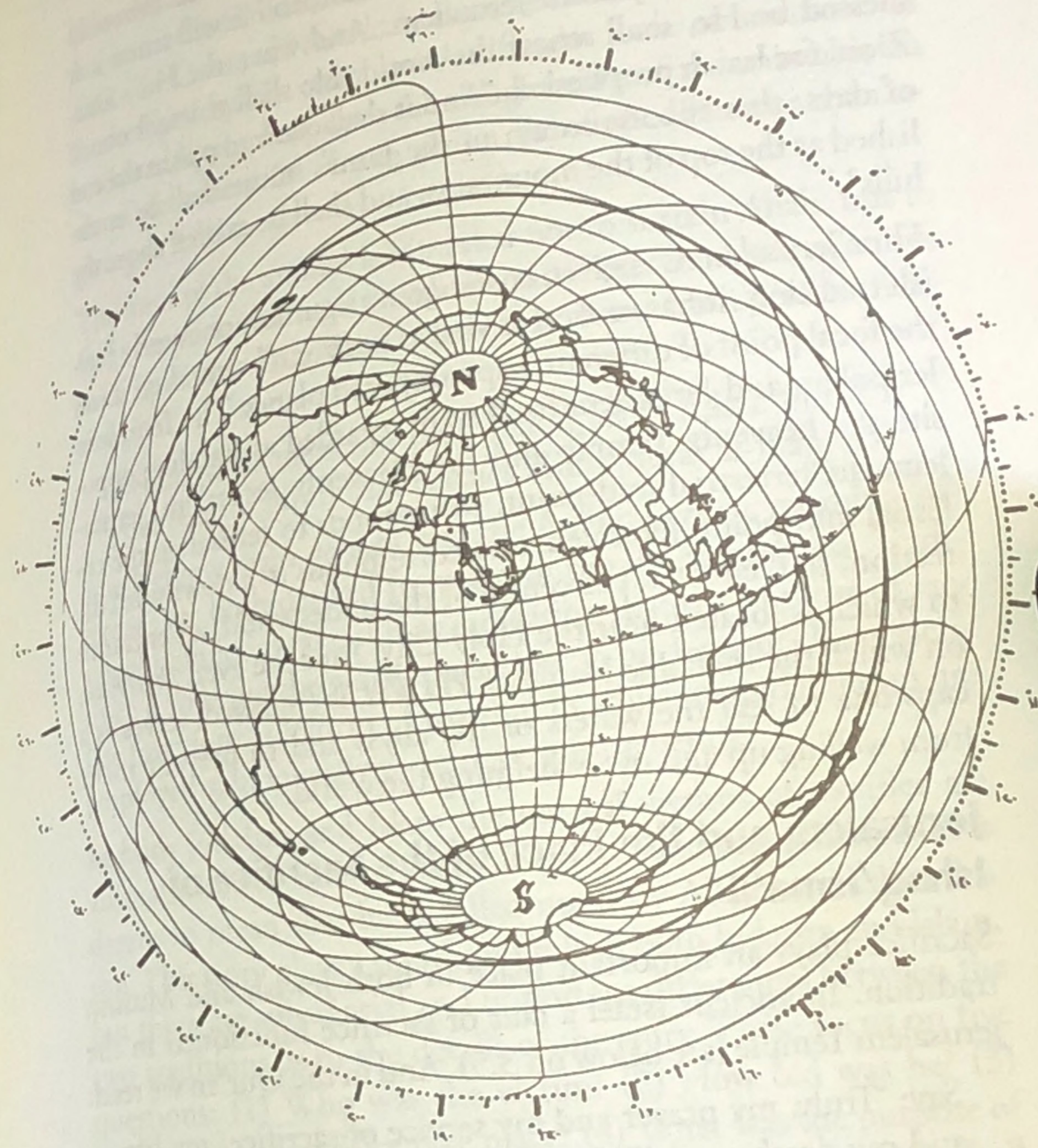


Figure 3.5 Makkah as the Centre of the Earth, according to H. Kamal al-Deen

world and its very centre. And just as God created the world from Jerusalem at the beginning of time, so He will renew it at the end of history from Jerusalem: 'And when the Holy One, blessed be He, shall renew the world, He shall renew it out of Zion, for Isaiah prophesied: "And it shall come to pass at the end of days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills".'

Thus Jerusalem was given cosmogonic significance in early Jewish tradition. It has vertical as well as horizontal centrality: it was the focal point of different, superimposed planes. The Temple in Jerusalem and Jerusalem itself were regarded as standing opposite the heavenly Temple and the Heavenly Jerusalem. Jerusalem, the terrestrial mid-point, corresponds to Jerusalem the celestial mid-point. Jerusalem also corresponds in a downward direction, to Gehenna, the centre of the underworld, an entrance to which is located near the Holy City. And the even *shetiyyah*, on which the Ineffable Name of *YHWH*, is engraved, serves as a capstone to seal the waters of the abyss and to prevent them from welling up and overwhelming the world.

Jerusalem and the Place of the Sacrifice of Ishaq/Isma'il

Sacrifice plays an important place in both Jewish and Muslim tradition. In ancient Israel a cult of sacrifice functioned in the Jerusalem Temple (see below on 3.5). And in the Qur'an we read:

Say: 'Truly, my prayer and my service of sacrifice, my life and my death are (all) for Allah, the Lord of the worlds'.
(Surat al-An'am, 164)

Therefore perform the prayer for your Lord and sacrifice.
(Surat al-Kawthar, 2)

Sacrifice originally implied offering food to the gods, but this

primitive notion was unacceptable to all the Prophets, both those known to the Children of Israel and those known to the Muslims. The Creator of the world does not need to be sustained by food offered by His creatures. A different form of sacrifice was instituted by the Prophets: the slaughtering of the animal is an act of atonement for wrong action, or of obedience or thanksgiving to Allah.

The meat of the animal is intended not to sustain Allah, but to feed the poor, the needy and friends. Thus in the Qur'an we read, in words which could easily be echoed from Jewish tradition:

Neither their meat nor their blood reach Allah: but it is your fear [of Him] that reaches Him. (Surat al-Hajj, 35)

The Hebrew word *qorban*, and the Arabic *qurban*, meaning 'offering', are both derived from a root signifying nearness. Traditional homiletics take this as indicating that the purpose of sacrifice is to bring the worshipper close to his Creator. Thus sacrifice functions as a form of worship in which material means are employed symbolically to achieve spiritual ends.

In both Judaism and Islam the normal victims of sacrifice are animals, but in one remarkable story Ibrahim understands a dream to mean that he is called upon by Allah to sacrifice his son. This story plays a significant role in both Judaism and Islam, but there are substantial and important differences between the two traditions as to the details of the story. These focus on five questions: (1) Who was the victim? (2) How old was he? (3) Where did the sacrifice take place? (4) What was the purpose of the sacrifice? (5) Did Ibrahim actually sacrifice his son? We shall consider each of these questions in turn from both Jewish and Muslim sources.

In Jewish tradition the victim was Ishaq. This is clearly stated in Genesis 22:2, 'Take now your son, your only son, whom you

love, even Isaac, and go into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell you of.' The wording of the biblical text is, however, unusual, with the name of the son curiously delayed. This provoked comment in the Midrash. God said to Abraham: 'Take your son'. Abraham replied: 'I have two sons, Isaac and Ishmael, which of them do you mean?' 'Your only son', answered God. 'But each of them,' replied Abraham, 'is the only son of his mother'. 'Whom you love', said God. 'But I love them both', said Abraham. 'Even Isaac', God finally specifies. This incident, which was seen as one of the defining moments in the history of Israelite sacrifice, is known in Jewish tradition as the *Aqedah*, 'the Binding' or the *Aqedat Yitzhaq*, 'the Binding of Isaac', from the use of the verb '*aqad*' in Genesis 22:9, 'and Abraham bound Isaac his son, and laid him upon the altar'.

No age is given in the Bible for Ishaq at the time of the incident. He is simply called a 'youth' (*na'ar*), which can cover a wide age range. Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, however, gives Ishaq's age as thirty-seven, a figure which was carefully worked out from the chronology implicit in the Book of Genesis. This is important to the midrashic reading of the story, for it suggests that Ishaq, as a full-grown man, must have cooperated with Ibrahim in the sacrifice. He must have been a willing partner.

According to the Bible, the place of the sacrifice was a mountain in the land of Moriah. Where exactly the land of Moriah historically may have been is much debated, but from an early date the precise place of the sacrifice was identified as the Temple mount in Jerusalem. This identification is implied already within Genesis 22. Note verse 14: 'And Abraham called the name of that place *Adonai-yireh*: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen.' The title 'mount of the Lord' was applied to the Temple mount in Jerusalem. The identification is clear in 2 Chronicles 3:1, 'Then Solomon began to build the house of

the Lord at Jerusalem in mount Moriah, where the Lord appeared unto David his father.' And again in Jubilees 18:13, 'And Abraham called that place, The Lord has seen (hence the saying, On the mount the Lord has seen) – that is mount Sion.'

In Islamic tradition, while the Qur'an does not name the son of Ibrahim involved in the aborted sacrifice, tradition overwhelmingly identifies him as Isma'il. The Muslim commentators reason that Isma'il was born to Ibrahim when Ibrahim was 86 years old and that Isma'il was thirteen or fourteen years only at the time of his binding. Furthermore, Ibrahim was 100 years old when Ishaq was born, so that during his first fourteen years Isma'il was the 'only son' of Ibrahim. In addition, in the Qur'an it is implied that the son is grown up, and of an age to cooperate with the father. He is described as 'ready to suffer and to forbear (*halim*).' If this were applied to Ishaq it would force us to place the event very late in the life of Ibrahim.

It should be noted, however, that some Muslim authorities, in accordance with Jewish tradition, identify the unnamed son in the Qur'an as Ishaq. These men of knowledge include 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, Ibn 'Abbas, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, Mujahid, Sa'id ibn Jubayr, and Ka'b al-Ahbar. Much depends on the interpretation of the reference which mentions Ishaq by name: 'And We gave him [i.e. Ibrahim] the good news of Ishaq – a prophet – one of the right-acting.' (Surat as-Saffat: 112). Some would argue that this identifies the unnamed son in the proceeding story of the sacrifice. The majority, however, see Ishaq here as contrasted with the unnamed son, who must, therefore, be Isma'il.

Muslim tradition identifies the place of the sacrifice as Mina, which lies in the hills to the east of Makkah. Tradition implies that it was after this event that Ibrahim built the Ka'bah in Makkah, and that the two events were linked. Ibrahim is depicted as saying to his son Isma'il: 'Allah commands me to build a house here,' pointing to the place where the Ka'bah now stands.

love, even Isaac, and go into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell you of.' The wording of the biblical text is, however, unusual, with the name of the son curiously delayed. This provoked comment in the Midrash. God said to Abraham: 'Take your son'. Abraham replied: 'I have two sons, Isaac and Ishmael, which of them do you mean?' 'Your only son', answered God. 'But each of them,' replied Abraham, 'is the only son of his mother'. 'Whom you love', said God. 'But I love them both', said Abraham. 'Even Isaac', God finally specifies. This incident, which was seen as one of the defining moments in the history of Israelite sacrifice, is known in Jewish tradition as the *Aqedah*, 'the Binding' or the *Aqedat Yitzhaq*, 'the Binding of Isaac', from the use of the verb *'aqad* in Genesis 22:9, 'and Abraham bound Isaac his son, and laid him upon the altar'.

No age is given in the Bible for Ishaq at the time of the incident. He is simply called a 'youth' (*na'ar*), which can cover a wide age range. Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, however, gives Ishaq's age as thirty-seven, a figure which was carefully worked out from the chronology implicit in the Book of Genesis. This is important to the midrashic reading of the story, for it suggests that Ishaq, as a full-grown man, must have cooperated with Ibrahim in the sacrifice. He must have been a willing partner.

According to the Bible, the place of the sacrifice was a mountain in the land of Moriah. Where exactly the land of Moriah historically may have been is much debated, but from an early date the precise place of the sacrifice was identified as the Temple mount in Jerusalem. This identification is implied already within Genesis 22. Note verse 14: 'And Abraham called the name of that place *Adonai-yireh*: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen.' The title 'mount of the Lord' was applied to the Temple mount in Jerusalem. The identification is clear in 2 Chronicles 3:1, 'Then Solomon began to build the house of

the Lord at Jerusalem in mount Moriah, where the Lord appeared unto David his father.' And again in Jubilees 18:13, 'And Abraham called that place, The Lord has seen (hence the saying, On the mount the Lord has seen) – that is mount Sion.'

In Islamic tradition, while the Qur'an does not name the son of Ibrahim involved in the aborted sacrifice, tradition overwhelmingly identifies him as Isma'il. The Muslim commentators reason that Isma'il was born to Ibrahim when Ibrahim was 86 years old and that Isma'il was thirteen or fourteen years only at the time of his binding. Furthermore, Ibrahim was 100 years old when Ishaq was born, so that during his first fourteen years Isma'il was the 'only son' of Ibrahim. In addition, in the Qur'an it is implied that the son is grown up, and of an age to cooperate with the father. He is described as 'ready to suffer and to forbear (*halim*)'. If this were applied to Ishaq it would force us to place the event very late in the life of Ibrahim.

It should be noted, however, that some Muslim authorities, in accordance with Jewish tradition, identify the unnamed son in the Qur'an as Ishaq. These men of knowledge include 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, Ibn 'Abbas, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, Mujahid, Sa'id ibn Jubayr, and Ka'b al-Ahbar. Much depends on the interpretation of the reference which mentions Ishaq by name: 'And We gave him [i.e. Ibrahim] the good news of Ishaq – a prophet – one of the right-acting.' (Surat as-Saffat: 112). Some would argue that this identifies the unnamed son in the preceding story of the sacrifice. The majority, however, see Ishaq here as contrasted with the unnamed son, who must, therefore, be Isma'il.

Muslim tradition identifies the place of the sacrifice as Mina, which lies in the hills to the east of Makkah. Tradition implies that it was after this event that Ibrahim built the Ka'bah in Makkah, and that the two events were linked. Ibrahim is depicted as saying to his son Isma'il: 'Allah commands me to build a house here,' pointing to the place where the Ka'bah now stands.

They laid the foundation together. Isma'il brought the stones and Ibrahim did the building. During the work they prayed:

And when Ibrahim built the foundations of the House with Isma'il: 'Our Lord! accept (this service) from us: You are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing. Our Lord! make us both Muslims, submitting to Your (Will), and of our progeny a Muslim people, submitting to Your (Will); and show us our places for the celebration of (due) rites; and turn to us; for Thou art Oft-returning, Most Merciful. (Surat al-Baqarah, 126-7)

What was the purpose of the Binding/Sacrifice? Jewish tradition invests the story with deep theological meaning. The incident was a test of the faith of Ibrahim and of Ishaq. Ishaq cooperated with his father and offered himself. According to Targum Pseudo-Jonathan both went together with a perfect heart to the place of sacrifice. This self-oblation of Ishaq stored up merit for his descendants. The Aqedah was an expiatory sacrifice which atoned for the sins of Ishaq's descendants, which they could invoke when in distress. He offered himself as a representative person, and when his posterity invoke the memory of the Aqedah God would reckon it as if they had bound themselves upon the altar before him.

The Aqedah is especially memorialized in Jewish tradition at the festival of Rosh Ha-Shanah. In the synagogue prayers for that day God is asked to recall 'the binding with which our father Abraham bound Isaac his son ... how he overbore his compassion to perform Your will with a perfect heart. So may Your compassion overbear Your anger against us.' The Shofar (the ram's horn), which is blown at this festival is said to recall the ram that was substituted for Ishaq at the Aqedah. Earlier in Temple times the Aqedah was probably used to justify the efficacy of the sacrifices in the Temple. The perpetual offering in the Temple (the Tamid), sacrificed on the very spot of Ishaq's self-oblation, was

efficacious because it reminded God of the Aqedah.

Islamic tradition sees the story as an illustration of the supreme virtue of submission to the will of Allah. Ibrahim, having seen in a vision that he was sacrificing his son, which he interprets as a Divine command to do so since 'dreams of the Prophets are true', sets off with him. He tells him:

'My son, I see in a dream that I am sacrificing you. Consider what is your view?' He replied: 'Father, do as you are commanded. You will find me, Allah willing, submissive.' (Surat as-Saffat, 102)

When Ibrahim took his son outside Makkah, he approached him, kissing him. He drew the knife very close to his throat, but Allah called to him:

We called out to him, 'O Ibrahim, you have already fulfilled the vision.' Thus indeed do We reward those who do right, for this was a manifest trial. (Surat as-Saffat, 104-106)

Thus both of them had been patient and obedient and had submitted to the will of Allah. Allah then substituted symbolically a ram or a sheep. According to traditional interpreters the whole event was symbolical. Allah does not require the flesh and blood of animals, much less of humans. But he does require the giving of the whole being to Him, the token of which is the willingness to give up something very dear, if duty requires the sacrifice. This event is also memorialized in Islam. It is in remembrance of the binding of Isma'il that Muslims keep an annual sacrifice (*Id al-Adha*), which is celebrated as a rite of pilgrimage on the 10th Dhu'l-Hijjah, i.e. on the twelfth month of the Islamic calendar. The Prophet, peace be upon him, when asked by the Companions about sacrifice, assured them that 'it is a tradition of your father Ibrahim'. It is possible that the reference was specifically to the binding of Isma'il.

A final point. Did Ibrahim actually sacrifice his son? The Bible appears to deny that Ishaq actually died. According to the Midrash 'the tears of the angels fell upon the knife, so that it could not cut Isaac's throat, but from terror his soul was about to escape from him. Then God spoke to the archangel Michael and said, "Why do you stand there? Let him not be slaughtered". Without delay Michael cried out "Abraham, Abraham lay not your hand upon the lad!"' Some Midrashic traditions, however, stress how close Ibrahim came actually to killing his son, stating that blood was drawn and spilled upon the altar. One tradition may even go so far as to suggest that Ishaq died and that his ashes were laid on the altar. This latter view allows the doctrine of resurrection to be introduced into the story. Islamic tradition is adamant that Ibrahim did not actually kill his son. According to one source, when Ibrahim drew the knife across Isma'il's throat the knife did not cut: Allah had placed a sheet of copper (*nuhas*) upon Isma'il's throat, or the knife itself was transformed (*inqalabat*) into copper (*sarat nuhasan*). However, since in the vision Ibrahim saw himself at the point of sacrifice, it was fulfilled by his laying the knife to Isma'il's throat.

Jerusalem as the Site of the Temple

Jerusalem is also important in Judaism because it is the place where the Temple was located. The Temple was the holiest shrine of the ancient Children of Israel, the place where alone sacrifice could be offered to Allah, the centre of their religious universe and one of the most powerful of their religious symbols. The Jerusalem Temple became the centre of the Judaic world only after a long process of historical development. Before the Israelites conquered Canaan they wandered in the wilderness accompanied by a portable shrine, the Tabernacle, a design of which was supposed to have been given by Allah to Musa on Sinai. The Tabernacle was the focus of Israel's religious life and functioned as a sign that Allah was always with them. So it is referred to as

the 'tent of meeting' between Allah and man. After the death of Musa, Joshua became the new leader of the Israelites, whom he led across the Jordan to conquer a considerable part of the Land of Canaan. The Israelites who settled in Canaan remained for a considerable period of time no more than a loose confederation of tribes, who were led from time to time in concerted action by charismatic leaders known as 'Judges', when any serious external threat to their security arose. Their 'national' shrine remained the Tabernacle, which was pitched semi-permanently at a number of places.

However, with the invasion of the Philistines from the west, this loose organisation proved inadequate. The need for greater centralisation, with the appointment of a permanent national leader, a king, arose. After the tragic defeat of the first king, Talut (Saul in the Bible), by the Philistines at Mount Gilboa, national leadership was assumed by Dawud. He united the tribes and reigned for seven and a half years as king in Hebron. In an attempt to consolidate his position further he captured the Jebusite stronghold of Jerusalem, which he intended to make his political and religious capital. Jerusalem had certain clear advantages as a capital. It did not belong to any of the tribes, so it became the property of the king, the City of Dawud; and it was located in a strategically central position in the middle of the country. Dawud set about making Jerusalem the cultic capital of the nation. He brought up the Ark of the Covenant, the most sacred cultic object in the Tabernacle, to Jerusalem and housed it in a special tent. He set about making arrangements for the construction of a more permanent home for the Ark. He purchased from Araunah (or Ornan), the Jebusite, his threshing-floor, erected an altar there and offered sacrifices. He collected materials for the construction of the Temple, but he was prevented by a divine oracle from building the House, because, according to Jewish tradition, he 'had shed blood abundantly, and had made great wars.' Instead, the oracle promised, the House would be built by

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Dawud's son Sulayman. Sulayman accomplished the task with the help of Hiram, king of Tyre, who was a friend of his father Dawud, and whose craftsmen possessed the necessary skills of working in stone, wood and bronze.

Though Sulayman's Temple would have been an important shrine, it remained essentially a private royal chapel. Other cultic centres, referred to in the tradition as 'high places', continued to operate throughout the Land, attended by the priests who offered sacrifices on their altars. The next important step in establishing Jerusalem as the religious centre of Israel came in the late seventh century BCE, in the reign of King Josiah. Josiah instituted a thorough reorganization of the religious practices, which involved the destruction of the local altars and the centralization of worship and of sacrifice at the Temple in Jerusalem. The effect of these reforms was momentous. They established the fundamental principle that only in the Jerusalem Temple was it permissible to offer sacrifice to Allah. This principle was seldom questioned in later Judaism. The Samaritans disputed it and claimed that the Law established their Temple on Mount Gerizim as the one true Temple for all Israel. And around the mid second century BCE a Zadokite priest from Jerusalem constructed a Jewish Temple at Leontopolis in Egypt, which remained in operation till it was closed by the Romans in 73 CE. However, the majority of Jews accepted the reforms, so that when synagogues emerged, both in the Land of Israel itself and in the Diaspora, as the focus of local worship, it was a cardinal principle that they were not Temples where sacrifice was offered to Allah, but places of prayer and of study of the Law. And in numerous ways these synagogues were symbolically subordinated to the Temple: prayer in them was directed towards Jerusalem and occurred at the time of the morning and evening sacrifices in the Temple. The idea was that the worship of the synagogue depended on the worship of the Temple. It involved participation in the Temple service at a distance. The reforms of Josiah mark the decisive turning point

in establishing Jerusalem and its Temple as the most holy place in Judaism.

The establishment of the Jerusalem Temple as the religious centre of Judaism was, arguably, something of an historical afterthought, which was opposed by conservative elements, as the tradition itself acknowledges. It required strong justification. This was provided in a number of ways. The reforms of Josiah were legitimated by finding a copy of the Book of the Law in the Temple. The nature of this Book of the Law is much disputed but it is widely held by scholars that it bears some relationship to the present Book of Deuteronomy in the Hebrew Bible. Significantly, the Book of Deuteronomy describes a highly centralized cult, with sacrifice being offered only 'in the place which the Lord shall choose to cause His name to dwell there' – which was taken as a barely concealed reference to Jerusalem. The building of the Jerusalem Temple was thus seen as one of the primary duties to be undertaken by the Israelites when they entered the Promised Land. Tradition also stressed the point that Dawud, though he himself was not destined to build the Temple, received the plan of it by divine inspiration and passed it on to his son Sulayman: 'Then David gave to Solomon his son ... the pattern of all that he had by the spirit, for all the courts of the house of the Lord, and for all the chambers round about.' The wording seems to echo the tradition that Musa received the plan of the Tabernacle direct from Allah: 'And let them make for Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the furniture thereof, even so shall ye make it.'

Later tradition was to speculate on the relationship between the pattern of the Tabernacle and the pattern of the Temple. The Midrash on Samuel was to suggest that the pattern of the Temple was contained in a scroll which was first handed by Allah to Musa and then passed down by him to Sulayman: 'The Temple

Scroll which the Holy One, blessed be He, committed to Moses while standing, Moses stood and transmitted to Joshua while standing, and Joshua to the elders, and the elders to the prophets, and the prophets to David, and David to Solomon.'

Under the leadership of Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonians besieged Jerusalem in 588 BCE, finally capturing the city in July 587 BCE. Its walls, Temple and houses were all razed to the ground; all the treasures were taken, and the city's inhabitants were either killed, enslaved or sent into exile. However, when Cyrus the Persian defeated Babylon, he allowed the exiles who wished to do so to return home. Under the High Priest Zerubbabel the returned exiles began to rebuild the Temple, completing the work around 500 BCE.

This Temple was totally transformed by Herod, who ruled over the Jews from 37-4 BCE. Herod was one of the great builders of antiquity and the structure which he raised was by any standards a magnificent edifice. It is about Herod's Temple that we have most information, partly because of the literary evidence found in Josephus and in the Mishnaic Tractate Middot, and partly because much of his work still stands to the present day and has been thoroughly investigated by archaeologists over the past one hundred years.

As we noted earlier (see above on 3.1) the Temple was coherently organised in a series of spaces which represented areas of increasing holiness (see Fig. 3.7). The outermost and least holy area was the Court of the Gentiles. Within this was the Court of the Women, which could be visited only by Jewish women. Between the Court of the Gentiles and the inner courts was a barrier (the *soreg*) which contained inscriptions in Greek warning Gentiles that they were not allowed to pass beyond this point. Beyond the Court of Women, was the Court of Israel which marked the limits to which non-priestly Jewish males could penetrate into the Temple. Beyond this lay the Court of the Priests,

into which only priests could enter. Within the Court of the Priests stood the temple proper (the *heikhal*), which was divided into three sections: a porch (*ulam*), an outer part (the holy place) and an inner part (the Holy of Holies), into which the High Priest alone was permitted to enter on the Day of Atonement. In front of the *heikhal* stood the large altar of burnt offering on which the daily sacrifices were offered. This plan corresponds generally to the descriptions of both the Tabernacle and the Temple given in the Bible, but it was not undisputed, as has become clear from the Temple Scroll from Qumran. This proposes a rather different, more symmetrical ground plan (see Fig. 3.7), which in actual fact would be hard to fit unto the present Temple site (see further below).

The fundamental service of the Temple was the offering of the obligatory daily and festival sacrifices. The service was conducted by the priests who were arranged in courses (*mishmarot*), each course being entrusted with the services for a particular period of time. It is unclear to what extent prayer played a part in the Temple services. Prayer certainly was involved when a sacrifice was made: confession was made over the animal before it was slaughtered. The Psalms were also recited as part of the Temple liturgy, and there is evidence that various liturgies of prayer may have been prayed by the priests in the Temple. This is suggested by the Dead Sea Scrolls, which are said to have emanated from a priestly group which had come from the Temple. The Scrolls contain numerous priestly liturgies, many of which do not have a sectarian character. They may well have been liturgies which had been recited by the priests in the Jerusalem Temple.

The supremacy of the Temple within Judaism and its links with the far-flung Jewish communities were established in a variety of ways. Besides the obligatory sacrifices, individuals sent offerings of various kinds to the Temple – peace offerings, meal offerings, freewill offerings, as well as obligatory sacrifices which included

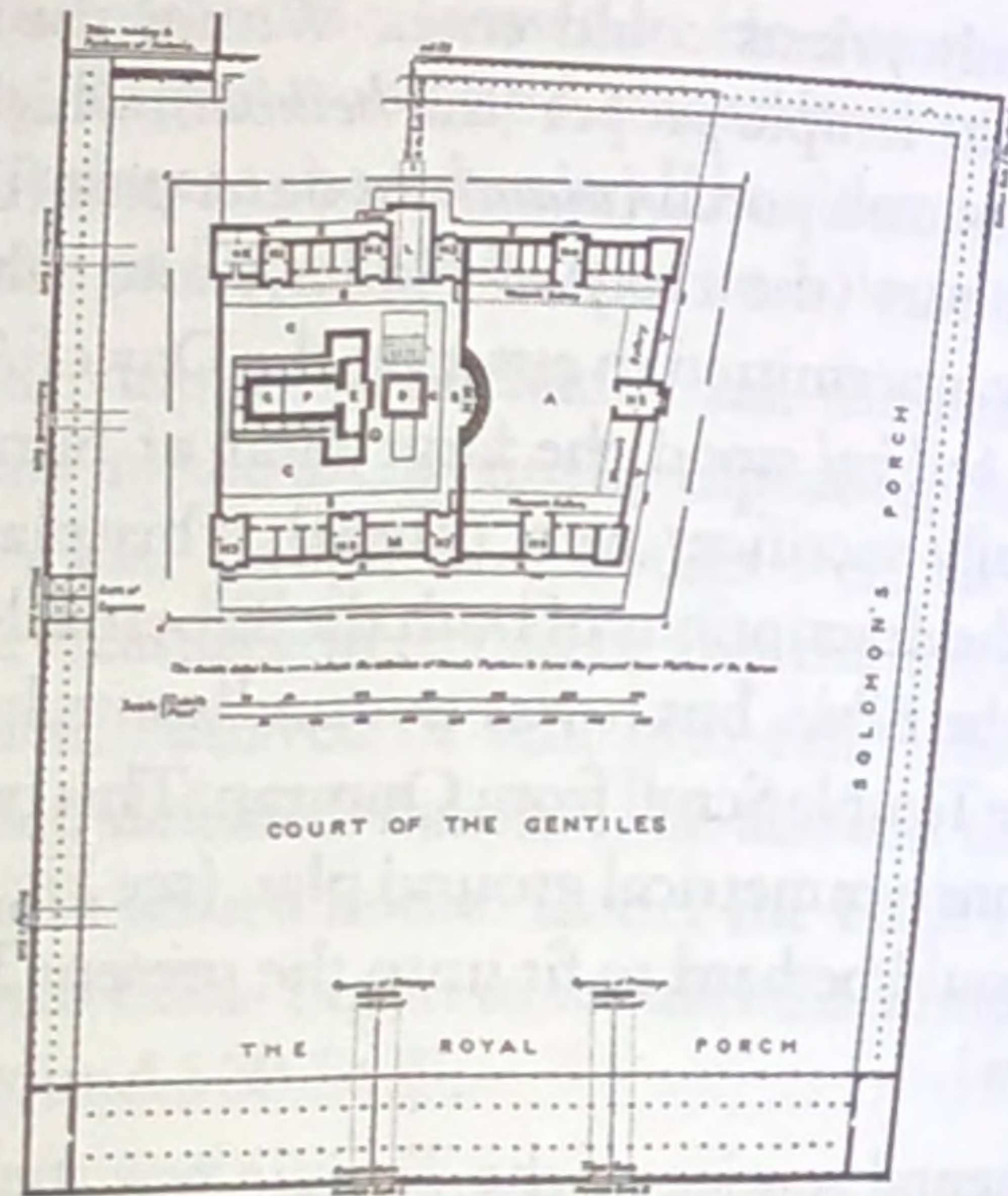


Figure 3.6: The Plan of Herod's Temple (after Hastings, Dictionary of the Bible, 2nd ed., p. 967)

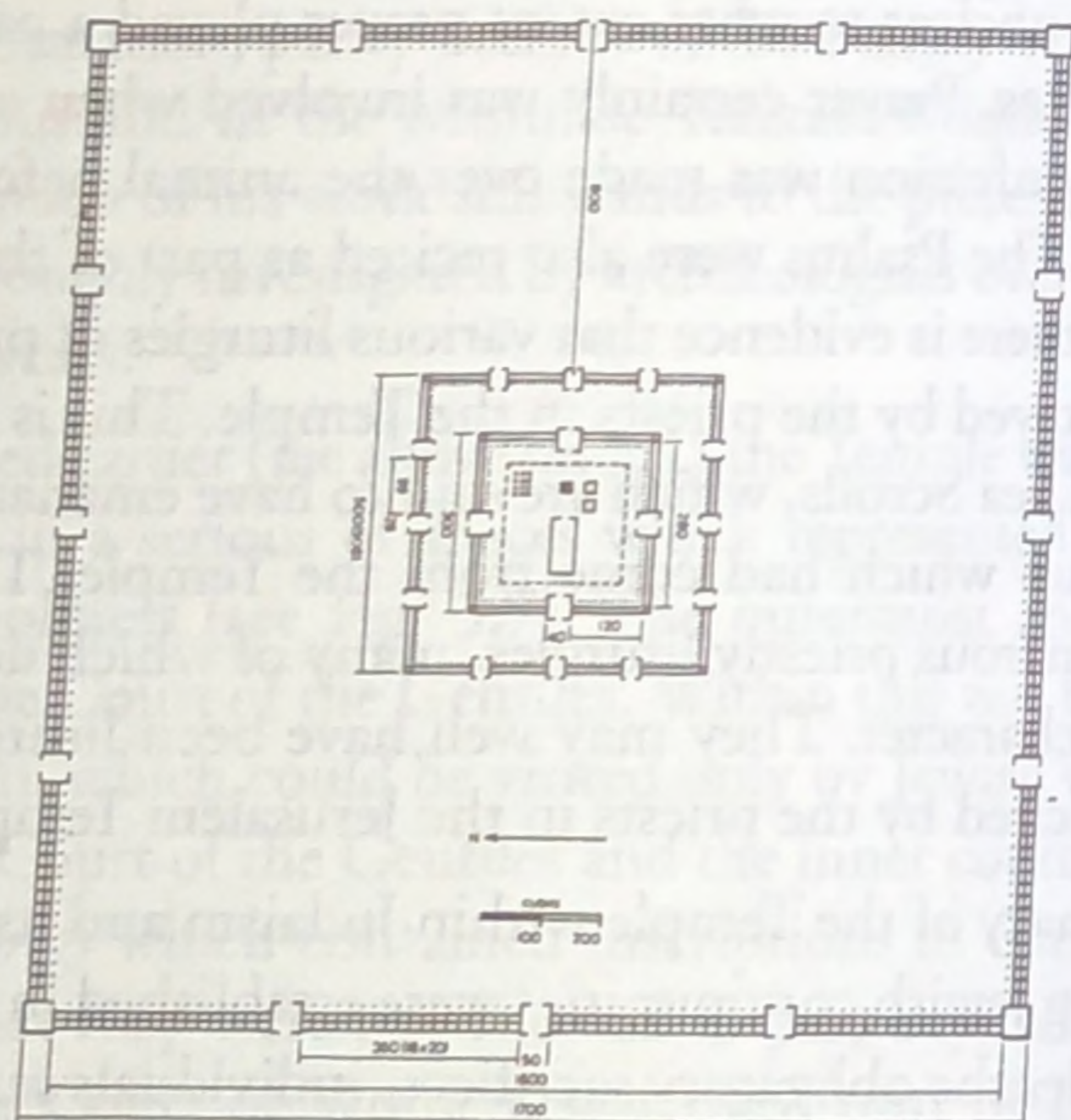


Figure 3.7: The Plan of the Temple according to the Temple Scroll from Qumran (after J. Maier, The Temple Scroll, Fig. 3.3)

sin offerings and guilt offerings. The population contributed to the upkeep of the Temple both through the system of tithes, which were a tax on produce to support the priests, and through the half shekel Temple tax which every adult male was expected to pay. The High Priest was regarded as the religious leader of the Jews, and, among his other powers, he seems to have exercised the right to determine the calendar, which at this period was not fixed, but calculated ad hoc. He communicated with the scattered Jewish communities through emissaries (called *apostoloi* in Greek and *shelihim* in Hebrew), who often carried letters from him. As we have noted, prayer outside Jerusalem was orientated towards Jerusalem. Above all, it was through the institution of pilgrimage that the Diaspora was linked to the Temple. Three festivals in the year – Passover (*Pesah*), Pentecost (*Shavu'ot*) and Booths (*Sukkot*) were designated pilgrim festivals, at which Jews were expected, if they could manage it, to go up to Jerusalem. The emphasis on pilgrimage was doubtless a direct result of the centralization of the cult under Josiah. Before this centralization it was easy for Jews to celebrate the festivals at their local shrines. Pilgrimage may have been promoted by both the Hasmoneans and by Herod as a way of extending their influence and of boosting the economy of Jerusalem.

By the end of the Second Temple period the supremacy and centrality of the Jerusalem Temple within Judaism had been completely established. Then it was destroyed in 70 CE, along with Jerusalem, by the Romans under their general Titus. The resulting trauma to Jews and to Judaism was enormous. Attempts were made to find an explanation for this terrible event. The prophets Micah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel had seen the sins and the faithlessness of the people as being the cause of the destruction of the First Temple by the Babylonians, and these reasons were once again invoked to explain the destruction of the Second Temple. 2 Baruch, a pseudepigraphic work written at the end of the first century CE, purports to be a letter written by Baruch at the time

of the first destruction to the northern tribes who had been carried away into captivity, but really it is an attempt to address the reasons for the destruction of Herod's Temple by the Romans: 'My brothers, learn what befell Zion, namely that Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, came up against us, for we had sinned against Him who created us and had not observed the commandments which He ordered us'. For the Rabbis the major cause of the destruction of the Temple was sectarian division and 'baseless enmity' (*sin'at hinnam*) among Jews. Many claimed that the event had been foreseen, and thus tried to integrate into the purposes of Allah. The Testament of Moses states that before Musa died he had spoken to his successor Joshua predicting that a king from the east would destroy Jerusalem and the Temple, 'and with fire he will burn the city with the holy Temple of the Lord, and he will exile all the people and will lead them to his own land.' Ibrahim also was supposed to have seen in a vision the destruction of the Temple:

'Look at this picture', and I looked and I saw, and behold the picture swayed, and from its left side a crowd of heathens ran out and they captured the men, women and children who were on its right side, and some they slaughtered and others they kept with them. Behold, I saw (them) running by the way of four ascents and they burned the Temple with fire, and they plundered the holy things that were in it.

Similarly, Ya'qub was supposed to have had a dream, the meaning of which was explained to him by the angel as follows: 'And this place (the Temple) will be made desolate, through the sins of your grandsons, and a Temple of your children will be deserted.' Jeremiah, too, was warned of the impending doom to the city: 'Jeremiah, my chosen one, rise up and get out of this city, you and Baruch, because I am going to destroy it, for the multitude of the sins of those who inhabit it.' For the Christians, the destruction of the Temple was also an important event, which

confirmed their belief that the old order had been superseded. They depicted 'Isa as foretelling the event:

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those who are sent to you, how often have I longed to gather your children, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you refused. So be it! Your house will be left to you desolate. Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down.

Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children, for behold, the days are coming in which they shall say, 'Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck'. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us', and to the hills, 'Cover us'.

Despite its destruction, the Jerusalem Temple remained symbolically at the heart of Judaism. A whole section of the Mishnah, Qodashim, was devoted to the study of it. And Jews prayed twice daily in the Shemoneh 'Esreh for its restoration. It was embellished in myth and legend. The idea was developed that the Temple on earth was only a copy of an ideal Temple in heaven, which would descend from heaven at the end of history and be established on earth. The roots of this idea are very old.

Ezekiel in the Babylonian exile saw a vision of an ideal Temple which would be built at the end of days (see Ezek. 40-48). Even when the Second Temple was built, the notion that there would be a new, heavenly Temple in the Messianic Age was by no means lost. It is probably this idealised Temple that is alluded to in the Book of Jubilees: 'After this they will turn to Me from amongst the Gentiles ... and I will build My Sanctuary in their midst, and I will dwell with them.' 'Write for Moses from the beginning of creation till My Sanctuary has been built among them for all eternity ... And the angel ... took the tables of the years from the time of the creation of the Law ... until the Sanctuary

of the Lord shall be made in Jerusalem on Mount Zion, and all the luminaries be renewed for healing and for peace and for blessing and for all the elect of Israel.'

The Book of Enoch envisages the ultimate replacement of the 'old House', the man-made Temple, by a God-made Temple, a 'new House, greater and loftier than the first', which would be 'set up in place of the first'. In the Book of Revelation in the New Testament the Seer John sees 'a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them". The Heikhalot mystics of the Talmudic period, who were denied access to a Temple on earth, believed they could enter into this heavenly Temple and join in the celestial liturgy with the angels.

The most remarkable of these visionary Temples is found in the Temple Scroll from Qumran. This describes in detail the layout and the service of the true Temple, which differs very considerably from the Temple which stood in Jerusalem when the scroll was composed. This is the Temple which the sect believed would be established in Jerusalem at the end of days, though even it, the Scroll implies, would be replaced finally by a divinely created sanctuary, as Allah promised to Ya'qub at Bethel, when he dreamed his vision of the ladder (Genesis 28:10-22):

These [you shall offer to the Lord at your festivals, besides your votive and freewill offerings] for your burnt offerings and your libations [...] in the Temple upon which I [cause] My name [to dwell ...], the burnt offerings [of each day] on that day, according to the law of this regulation, always from the children of Israel ..., which they shall bring Me for acceptance for th[em]. And I will accept them, and

they will be My people, and I will be their [God] forever. [And] I will dwell with them forever and ever. And I will sanctify My [Te]mple with My presence when I cause My presence to dwell on it, until the Day of Blessing (or: of Creation) when I will create My Temple, to establish it for me for all times, according to the covenant which I made with Jacob in Bethel.

The Jerusalem Temple is mentioned a number of times in the Qur'an and in early Islamic tradition. There was a Jewish tradition, part of the increasingly fabulous image projected by the Jews of the ancient Temple, that King Sulayman was helped by demons to build the Temple, after he had prayed to Allah to aid him in the work. In response to his request for help, Allah was said to have granted him a magic seal-ring by which he was able to call up the demons to enlist their help in the construction of the Temple. This idea is classically stated in the magical work known as the Testament of Solomon. The angel says to Sulayman: 'Solomon, son of David, take the gift which the Lord God, the highest Sabaoth, has sent you. (With it) you shall imprison all the demons, both male and female, and with their help you shall build Jerusalem, when you bear this seal of God.' The subjugation of the jinn to Sulayman and the assistance which they gave him in building his palace and the Temple also feature in the Qur'an:

Then We subjected the wind to his power, to flow gently at his order, wherever he willed – as also the shaytans, (including) every kind of builder and diver – as also others bound together in fetters.' (Surat Sad, 35-37)

Sulayman's power over the wind and the jinn are referred to again in another passage of the Qur'an:

(It was Our power that made) the violent (unruly) wind flow (tamely) for Sulayman, to his order, to the land which We had blessed: for We have full knowledge of all things.

of the Lord shall be made in Jerusalem on Mount Zion, and all the luminaries be renewed for healing and for peace and for blessing and for all the elect of Israel.'

The Book of Enoch envisages the ultimate replacement of the 'old House', the man-made Temple, by a God-made Temple, a 'new House, greater and loftier than the first', which would be 'set up in place of the first'. In the Book of Revelation in the New Testament the Seer John sees 'a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them". The Heikhalot mystics of the Talmudic period, who were denied access to a Temple on earth, believed they could enter into this heavenly Temple and join in the celestial liturgy with the angels.

The most remarkable of these visionary Temples is found in the Temple Scroll from Qumran. This describes in detail the layout and the service of the true Temple, which differs very considerably from the Temple which stood in Jerusalem when the scroll was composed. This is the Temple which the sect believed would be established in Jerusalem at the end of days, though even it, the Scroll implies, would be replaced finally by a divinely created sanctuary, as Allah promised to Ya'qub at Bethel, when he dreamed his vision of the ladder (Genesis 28:10-22):

These [you shall offer to the Lord at your festivals, besides your votive and freewill offerings] for your burnt offerings and your libations [...] in the Temple upon which I [cause] My name [to dwell ...], the burnt offerings [of each day] on that day, according to the law of this regulation, always from the children of Israel ..., which they shall bring Me for acceptance for th[em]. And I will accept them, and

they will be My people, and I will be their [God] forever. [And] I will dwell with them forever and ever. And I will sanctify My [Te]mple with My presence when I cause My presence to dwell on it, until the Day of Blessing (or: of Creation) when I will create My Temple, to establish it for me for all times, according to the covenant which I made with Jacob in Bethel.

The Jerusalem Temple is mentioned a number of times in the Qur'an and in early Islamic tradition. There was a Jewish tradition, part of the increasingly fabulous image projected by the Jews of the ancient Temple, that King Sulayman was helped by demons to build the Temple, after he had prayed to Allah to aid him in the work. In response to his request for help, Allah was said to have granted him a magic seal-ring by which he was able to call up the demons to enlist their help in the construction of the Temple. This idea is classically stated in the magical work known as the Testament of Solomon. The angel says to Sulayman: 'Solomon, son of David, take the gift which the Lord God, the highest Sabaoth, has sent you. (With it) you shall imprison all the demons, both male and female, and with their help you shall build Jerusalem, when you bear this seal of God.' The subjugation of the jinn to Sulayman and the assistance which they gave him in building his palace and the Temple also feature in the Qur'an:

Then We subjected the wind to his power, to flow gently at his order, wherever he willed – as also the shaytans, (including) every kind of builder and diver – as also others bound together in fetters.' (Surat Sad, 35-37)

Sulayman's power over the wind and the jinn are referred to again in another passage of the Qur'an:

(It was Our power that made) the violent (unruly) wind flow (tamely) for Sulayman, to his order, to the land which We had blessed: for We have full knowledge of all things.

And of the shaytans, there were some who dived for him, and did other work besides; and We watched over them. (Surat al-Anbiya', 80-81)

Again another passage mentions the types of work that the jinn performed for Sulayman:

There were jinn that worked under his supervision by the leave of his Lord, and if any of them deviated from Our command, We made him taste of the Penalty of Blazing Fire. They worked for him as he desired, (making) arches, statues, basins as large as reservoirs, and (cooking) cauldrons fixed (in their places): 'Work, family of Dawud, with thanks! But few of My slaves are grateful!' (Surah Saba', 12-13)

According to a hadith, the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, referred to the prayer which Sulayman prayed when, having completed the Temple (Mosque), he thanked Allah for enabling him to complete his place of worship:

'Abdullah ibn 'Umar narrated that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said: 'When Sulayman completed Bait al-Maqdis, he asked Allah for three things: wisdom, a kingdom greater than anybody else should have after him, and that anyone who visits this sacred mosque only intending to offer salat there would be purified of his wrong actions and become as he was on the day his mother gave birth to him. He was granted the first two, and I hope that he will be granted the third also'.

The visit of Bilqis, the Queen of Saba', to Sulayman is also mentioned in the Qur'an. According to the Qur'an, Sulayman invited the Queen of Saba' to come to Jerusalem and to view the Temple. She accepted his invitation and the jinn brought her throne to Sulayman in Jerusalem. When she was there she embraced Islam and submitted to Allah, abandoning the worship

of the sun, saying:

'O my Lord! I have indeed wronged my self: I do (now) submit (in Islam), with Sulayman, to the Lord of the Worlds.' (Surat an-Naml, 46)

Finally the Qur'an too records how Allah warned the Israelites that the Temple would be destroyed because of their wrong actions:

When the promised first warning came to pass, We sent against you slaves of Our's given to terrible warfare: they entered the inmost parts of your house; and it was a warning (completely) fulfilled. Then once again We gave you the upper hand over them: We gave you increase in resources and sons, and made you the more numerous in manpower. If you do well, you do well for yourselves; if you do evil, (you do it) against yourselves. So when the second of the warnings came to pass, (We permitted your enemies) to disfigure your faces, and to enter the Temple as they had entered it before, and to visit with destruction all that fell into their power. (Surat al-Isra', 5-7)

There is clear reference here to the destruction of the First Temple by the Babylonians and the second by the Romans.

Chapter 4

The Sanctity of Jerusalem in Islam

Jerusalem is held sacred by Muslims for the following reasons: it is a holy city particularly blessed by Allah; it is a place where the performance of certain right actions and duties carries a special reward; it is the place in which the Second Mosque was built; it is the direction of the first qiblah; it was the destination of the Prophet Muhammad's Isra' (Night Journey) and from there he made his Mi'raj (Ascension to above the seven heavens); it was a place that was conquered and re-Islamicised by the Caliph 'Umar. We will illustrate each of these six points in detail from traditional sources, starting, where appropriate, with Qur'an and Hadith.

Jerusalem as a Holy and Blessed Place

Qur'an

Jerusalem is not mentioned by name in the Qur'an but there are a number of ayat where traditional commentators have detected a reference to it, or more generally to the Land of Palestine in which it is located. In each of these references there is the implication that the city or its environs are set apart as holy, either because they have received special divine blessings, or because they have been, or will be, the scene of major events in sacred history. The following are a selection of such references

Glory be to the One who took His Slave for a journey by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Furthest Mosque, whose precincts We have blessed – in order that We might

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show him some of Our Signs: for He is the One Who hears and sees (all things).' (Surah Bani Isra'il or Surat al-Isra', 17:1)

This famous passage, in which Allah ta'ala corroborates the tradition regarding the Isra' of the Prophet Muhammad (on which see further below), was traditionally interpreted as referring to the journey by the Prophet ('His Slave') from the Ka'bah in Makkah ('the Sacred Mosque') to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem ('the farthest Mosque'), so called because it was 'the place of worship farthest west which was known to the Arabs in the time of the Holy Prophet' (Yusuf 'Ali). Some of the 'Signs' which the Prophet, peace be upon him, was shown there were the signs of divine judgement on the Temple which had been destroyed several times in its history because of the wrong actions of the people. The phrase 'whose precincts We blessed', was seen as confirming the location of the Farthest Mosque, since elsewhere in the Qur'an this, and similar phrases, seem to refer to Palestine: see, for example, Surah 21 (al-Anbiya') 71 and 81. Thus Ibn 'Abbas states: *alladhi barakna hawlahu* means Palestine and Jordan, blessed by its rivers, fruit, vegetables, prophets and righteousness.' And Yakut al-Hamawi agrees that it means the land of ash-Sham (i.e. Palestine, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon).

Between them and the cities on which We had poured Our blessings, We had placed cities in prominent positions, and between them We had appointed stages of journey in due proportion: 'Travel therein, secure, by night and by day.' (Surah Saba', 34:18)

The ayah speaks of the people of Saba' in the Yemen and there is thus a clear reference to the ancient spice route which ran from the Yemen up the western side of Arabia through Mada'in Salih and Petra to Amman and Damascus. This route became a major route of pilgrimage to Makkah. Thus 'the cities on which We had poured Our blessings' would appear to be the cities lying at

the northern end of this route in Palestine and Syria. Hence Yusuf 'Ali comments: 'Syria was the land on which Allah "had poured his blessings", being a rich fertile country, where Ibrahim had lived: it includes the Holy Land of Palestine'. Ibn 'Abbas is more specific: 'the cities on which We had poured Our blessings' means Bait al-Maqdis, i.e. Jerusalem.

[Musa said:] "O my people! enter the holy land which God has assigned you, and turn not back ignominiously, for then you will be overthrown, to your own ruin." They said: "O Musa! In this land are a people of exceeding strength: we will not enter it until they leave: if (once) they leave, then shall we enter". (Surat al-Ma'idah, 5: 23-24)

The ayah alludes to the events detailed in the Old Testament in Numbers 13 and 14. The 'holy land which Allah has assigned you' is thus clearly the land of Palestine. Ibn 'Abbas, however, takes it more restrictively as referring to Jerusalem and the surrounding area.

Before this We wrote in az-Zabur, after the reminder (given to Musa): "My right-acting slaves shall inherit the land". (Surat al-Anbiya, 21:105)

'Az-Zabur (Psalms)' here are said to be the Psalms of David, whose name is specifically connected with the Psalms in Surah 4 (an-Nisa'), 163 and Surah 17 (al-Isra'), 55. One must bear in mind always that there may be a more or less tenuous link between the revelations that Allah mentions having given His Messengers and the actual corrupted texts which they possess. The closest parallel to the words quoted are in Psalm 37:29. Yusuf 'Ali, following traditional commentators, interprets *adh-dhikr* – the remembrance – as referring to the Tawrah of Musa. That which is alleged to come from the Tawrah, e.g. in Exodus 32:13, also contains the promise of 'inheriting the land'. Abu'd-Darda' identifies 'the land', which the right-acting will inherit, as Bilad ash-

Sham, i.e. Palestine, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon.

By the fig and the olive, and the Mount of Sinai, and this secure city – We have indeed created man in the best of moulds. (Surat at-Tin, 95:1-4)

Qatadah interprets the fig and the olive as an allusion to a mosque in Jerusalem. There seems to be little doubt that the 'City of security' is Makkah. Mount Sinai is also a place, the place where the Tawrah was given to Musa. This might suggest that the opening elements of the adjuration also should refer to a place or places where revelation was given. The olive (*az-zaytun*) could be meant to recall the Mount of Olives (*Har ha-Zeitim*) on the east side of Jerusalem, which plays a significant part in the New Testament, but the meaning of the text is very problematic.

And listen for the Day when the caller will call out from a place quite near. (Surah Qaf, 50:41)

As the following ayah makes clear, 'the Day' is the Day of Resurrection, when souls will be summoned for judgement. Ka'b al-Ahbar explained the 'place quite near' as a rock in Jerusalem from which an angel would proclaim, 'O rotten bones, come and gather for judgement.' The idea that the final angelic summons to judgement will go out from Jerusalem agrees with Jewish eschatology. (However, Ka'b al-Ahbar was himself of Jewish origins and it is possible that this commentary of his is here quite legitimately of Isra'ili origin—Ed.)

[Such a light is] in houses, which Allah has permitted to be built and that His name should be remembered in them, there are men in them who glorify Him in the mornings and in the evenings,... (Surat an-Nur, 24:36)

This ayah follows the well-known statement that 'Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth'. The obvious interpretation is that the 'houses' are 'all places of pure worship', wherever they might be found (Yusuf 'Ali). However, some traditional com-

the northern end of this route in Palestine and Syria. Hence Yusuf 'Ali comments: 'Syria was the land on which Allah "had poured his blessings", being a rich fertile country, where Ibrahim had lived: it includes the Holy Land of Palestine'. Ibn 'Abbas is more specific: 'the cities on which We had poured Our blessings' means Bait al-Maqdis, i.e. Jerusalem.

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mentators see a more specific reference to the Ka'bah in Makkah and the mosques of Madinah and Jerusalem which are held in particular honour.

We made the son of Maryam and his mother a Sign: We gave them both shelter on high ground, affording rest and security and furnished with springs. (Surat al-Mu'minun, 23:50)

In the parallel passage in Surah Maryam, 19:22, the 'high ground' (*rabwah*) is called 'a remote place'. The identity of this place has been much disputed. Al-Baidawi lists a number of possible locations. Ad-Dahhak and Qatadah both maintain that it is al-Quds.

But We delivered him and (his nephew) Lut (and directed them) to the land which We have blessed for all beings. (Surat al-Anbiya', 21:71)

There is little doubt that 'the land which We have blessed' is 'the land of Aram or Syria, which in its widest connotation includes Canaan or Palestine' (Yusuf 'Ali). See above on no. 1.

The fools among the people will say: 'What has turned them from the qiblah to which they are used?' Say: 'To Allah belong east and west: He guides whom He will to a straight path.' (Surat al-Baqarah, 2:142)

According to tradition the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, for about sixteen months after his migration to Madinah used to pray towards Jerusalem. Then the direction of prayer was changed towards Makkah. For discussion of this see further below.

(It was Our power that made) the violent (unruly) wind flow (tamely) for Sulayman, to his order, to the land which We had blessed: for We have full knowledge of all things. (Surat al-Anbiya', 21:81)

Again 'the land which We had blessed' is Palestine, in which

Sulayman's capital, Jerusalem, was located. With this reference Allah ta'ala confirms the ancient tradition that the famed wisdom of Sulayman involved an ability to control the spirits and the winds and the whole of nature.

Numerous events relating to the life of 'Isa, peace be upon him, are also located by the Qur'an in Jerusalem.

Zakariyya also received there the news that he would have a son called Yahya (John in the Bible):

While he was standing in prayer in the chamber, the angels called out to him: 'Allah gives you the good news of Yahya, witnessing the truth of a Word from Allah, and (be besides) noble, chaste, and a Prophet, of the right-acting.' (Surah Ali 'Imran, 39)

At al-Quds also Maryam was blessed with the fruit of winter in the summer time as a special gift from Allah. There also 'Isa spoke to Maryam while he was still in his cradle, which was the first miracle at Bait al-Maqdis. From there also he ascended alive into heaven to be saved from the clutches of his enemies who came to kill him. At 'Isa's supplication also there descended from heaven a table plentifully laden with food at Bait al-Maqdis. In Islamic eschatology, 'Isa will himself descend from heaven at Damascus and will go towards Bait al-Maqdis. The Antichrist will not enter Jerusalem, whose precincts are guarded by the angels. He will be slain by 'Isa by the gates of Lud. Bait al-Maqdis will be the land of gathering and resurrection and the Trumpet will be blown from the rock in Bait al-Maqdis.

Ahadith

The importance of al-Quds as a special place of prayer, of faith and of revelation, and as the setting for central events in the history of the Prophets, peace be upon all of them, continues to be affirmed in ahadith, as the following selection shows.

Maimunah bint Sa'd asked the Prophet, 'Tell us about Bait

al-Maqdis.' He said, 'It is the land of gathering and resurrection. Go there and offer prayer. Your prayer will be considered as a thousand prayers.' She asked, 'What if we cannot go there, or if there is nothing to carry us there?' He said, 'You should send some oil as a gift for its lamp, for whosoever offers a gift to it will have the reward of offering prayer there.'

Mu'awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan reported that the Prophet of Allah, peace be upon him, said, 'There is a group among my followers who will continue to be openly on the truth. No one who opposes them will harm them until the coming of the Hour.' They asked, 'Where are they, Messenger of Allah?' He said, 'They are in the neighbourhood of Bait al-Maqdis.'

'Abdullah ibn Hawalah al-Azdi reported that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, 'You will be assembled together in three separate armies: one in Syria, another in Yemen, and one in Iraq.' Al-Hawalah said, 'Messenger of Allah, choose for me.' He said, 'Syria is the best from among all of them. It is the best land, which Allah loves in this earth, from which Allah will choose His party and His worshippers. But if you cannot, then go to Yemen, and Allah will protect Syria and its people.'

The Prophet Muhammad said, 'Good tidings for Syria.' We asked, 'What for, Messenger of Allah?' He said, 'Because the angels of mercy spread out their wings over it [to protect it from evil].'

The Prophet said, 'The land of gathering of the believers is Syria.'

Also the prayer of the Prophet for it when he said, 'O Allah, bless for us our Syria.'

Abu Umamah said: 'The Prophet said, "The revelations

were revealed to me in three places: Makkah, Medina, and Syria."

Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet of Allah said, 'Only set out on journeys to three mosques: al-Masjid al-Haram [in Makkah], my Mosque [in Madinah], and al-Masjid al-Aqsa [in al-Quds].'

Anas ibn Malik reported that the Prophet of Allah said, 'Al-Buraq was brought to me and I rode him until I came to Bait al-Maqdis. I tied the rope to the ring where all the prophets tied their animals. Then I went into the mosque and offered two rak'ahs. Then I was made to ascend into heaven.'

Abu Hurairah narrated: The angel of death was sent to Musa, peace be upon him. When he came to Musa, Musa slapped him in the eye. The angel returned to his Lord and said, 'You sent me to a slave who does not want to die.' Allah replied, 'Return to him and tell him to put his hand on the back of an ox and for every hair that will come under it he will be granted one year of life.' Musa said, 'O Lord, what will happen after that?' Allah replied, 'Then death.' Musa said, 'Let it come now.' Musa then requested Allah to let him die as close to the Holy Land as the distance of a stone's throw from it. Abu Hurairah added: The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said, 'If I were there, I would show you his grave below the red sand hill at the side of the road.'

Rafi' ibn 'Umar al-Mazni said, 'I heard the Prophet say, "Al-'Ajwah [the best type of Madinan dates] and as-Sakhrah [i.e., the Dome of the Rock] are from Paradise."

The Sayings of the Companions and Followers

Finally the tradition that al-Quds is a special, blessed place is well attested also in the sayings of the Companions. Note, for

example, the following:

Ibn 'Abbas spoke of 'Bait al-Maqdis upon which Allah has sent fog and rain, since Allah created the days and years.' By this he seems to have meant that the land of Jerusalem and its environs are fertile for agricultural purposes.

Wahb ibn Munabbih said: 'The people of Bait al-Maqdis are the neighbours of Allah, and their obligation to Allah is not to punish His neighbours.'

Ka'b al-Ahbar said: 'In Bait al-Maqdis there are a thousand graves of the prophets.'

'Ali ibn Abi Talib said: 'Glad tidings for the residents of Bait al-Maqdis when trials appear. The one who remains there will be considered a fighter in the way of Allah. A time will come upon the people when one of them will say, "I wish I were a blade of straw between the bricks of Bait al-Maqdis." The best part of the land of Sham, which Allah most loves, is Bait al-Maqdis, the best-loved mountain is the Dome of the Rock, and the last part of the earth to be destroyed will be Bait al-Maqdis, which will abide forty years after the earth is destroyed, for it is a portion of Paradise.'

The Merits of Doing Good in al-Quds

According to ahadith certain duties, such as praying, setting out on Hajj, fasting and *sadaqah* are deemed as especially meritorious if performed in al-Quds.

The Merits of Prayer in al-Quds

As the second mosque to have been built on earth, as the direction of the first qiblah, as the place to which the Prophet was taken on a night journey and where he led all the other prophets in prayer, the al-Aqsa Mosque has great importance in Muslim tradition. The Prophet is said to have encouraged all Muslims to visit it and to offer prayer there: 'Only set out on journeys to

three mosques: al-Masjid al-Haram [in Makkah], my Mosque [in Madinah], and al-Masjid al-Aqsa [in al-Quds].' In another hadith the Prophet said, 'You should travel to visit three mosques: the Ka'bah [in Makkah], my mosque [in Madinah], and the mosque of Iliya [in al-Quds].'

Further encouragement to visit and pray in al-Aqsa Mosque is found in a hadith narrated by 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar. He related that the Prophet said:

When Sulayman completed Bait al-Maqdis, he asked Allah for three things: wisdom, a kingdom greater than anybody else should have after him, and that anyone who visits this sacred mosque only intending to offer salat there would be purified of his wrong actions and become as he was on the day his mother gave birth to him. He was granted the first two, and I hope that he will be granted the third also'

To underline the great reward to be obtained for offering prayers in al-Quds, the Prophet is reported to have said: 'Offering prayers in Masjid al-Haram multiplies by one hundred thousand times the reward to be obtained elsewhere, in my mosque by one thousand times, and in the mosque of Bait al-Maqdis by five hundred times.' Furthermore, to encourage Muslims to offer prayer in al-Quds, they were advised to send oil to supply the lamps in al-Aqsa Mosque, oil no doubt being representative of general financial support in the running of the mosque. See the hadith quoted above in chapter 3, in which Maimunah bint Sa'd questions the Prophet about Bait al-Maqdis.

Finally, Muqatil ibn Sulayman is also reported to have spoken of Bait al-Maqdis and to have said, 'There is not a hand's span in Bait al-Maqdis that has not been prayed in by a prophet or an angel.'

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The Merits of Performing Hajj or 'Umrah from al-Quds

A number of ahadith report that the Prophet spoke of the merits

of performing Hajj or 'Umrah from al-Quds. Thus, Umm Salamah states that she heard the Prophet saying, 'Whosoever starts his 'Umrah or Hajj from al-Aqsa Mosque in al-Quds, [going] to al-Masjid al-Haram [the Ka'bah], his wrong actions will be forgiven, both past and future.' In another version, he is reported to have said that Paradise would be his reward.

Another hadith from Umm Salamah says, 'Whosoever begins his 'Umrah from Bait al-Maqdis, [for him] it will be an expiation for all his past wrong actions.'

Again, Umm Salamah reported that the Prophet said, 'Whoever wears his *ihram* (for pilgrimage) from Bait al-Maqdis, his past wrong actions will be forgiven.' In a similar vein, Ibn 'Abbas reported that the Prophet said, 'Whosoever performs the Hajj and offers prayer in Madinah and in al-Aqsa Mosque in the same year will be reborn like a new child.'

There were a number of Companions, Followers, and scholars who are known to have commenced their Hajj or 'Umrah from al-Quds, including 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar, Mu'adh ibn Jabal, Ka'b al-Ahbar, Waki', Ya'la ibn Shaddad ibn Aws, and 'Umar ibn al-Khattab.

The Merits of Fasting and Sadaqah in Jerusalem

Hasan al-Basri is reported to have said that whosoever donates so much as one dirham towards Bait al-Maqdis will be exempt from the punishment of hellfire, and that whosoever gives one loaf of bread there, it will be equal to the volume of all the mountains on earth in gold. In addition, Muqatil ibn Hayyan al-Nabati is reported to have said that whosoever fasts one day in Bait al-Maqdis will be freed from hell fire.

The Merits of Death and Burial in Jerusalem

Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet said, 'He who dies in Bait al-Maqdis is as though he died in heaven.' Similarly, Wahn ibn Munabbih said, 'Whosoever is buried in Bait al-Maqdis will

be safe from the trials of the grave.' Note also the tradition (quoted above, in Chapter 3, the first section) which states that when Musa was approached by the angel of death, he requested his Lord to allow him to die close to the Holy Land, so that he would be at a distance of a stone's throw from Bait al-Maqdis. Ka'b al-Ahbar said that in Bait al-Maqdis there were about a thousand graves of the prophets.

The Merits of Jihad in al-Quds

The Prophet is reported to have said,

O Mu'adh, Allah will conquer the land of Syria after me for you, from al-'Arish [Egypt] to the Euphrates [Iraq]. Its men and women and their slaves will be people of the Ribat (fortresses guarding the frontiers of Islam) until the Day of Judgment. Whoever of you chooses to remain along the coastal region of Syria or in Bait al-Maqdis will be engaged in constant jihad until the Day of Judgment.

Al-Quds as the Holy City in which the Second Mosque was built

Abu Dharr al-Ghifari said:

I said, 'Messenger of Allah, which mosque was first built on this earth?' He replied, 'The Masjid al-Haram [in Makkah].' I asked, 'Then which?' He answered, 'The mosque of al-Aqsa [in Jerusalem].' I enquired, 'How long was there between them [their construction]?' He said, 'Forty years' and added, 'The earth is a mosque for you, so pray wherever you may be when the time for prayer comes, because it is a mosque.'

The Sacred Mosque of Makkah was the first house of worship appointed for mankind, as is stated in the Qur'an:

The first House (of worship) appointed for men was that at Bakkah: full of blessing and of guidance for all beings.

In it are Clear Signs; (for example), the Station of Ibrahim; whoever enters it is safe; Hajj to the House is a duty men owe to Allah, – those who can find a way to do it; but if any deny faith, Allah does not need any being. (Surah Ali 'Imran, 96-97)

Mujahid said that the Muslims and the Jews had a dispute concerning the two mosques. The Jews asserted that Bait al-Maqdis was better and greater than the Ka'bah because it was there that Ibrahim migrated, while the Muslims asserted that the Ka'bah was superior as it was there that Allah revealed the above ayat.

According to the ayat of the Qur'an cited above, the Ka'bah was the first place of worship established on earth, its foundation having been laid by the angels. In another ayah Allah states:

When your Lord said to the angels, 'I am putting a regent on the earth.' They said, 'Will You put on it one who will work corrupt in it and shed blood when we glorify Your praise and proclaim Your purity?' He said, 'I know what You do not know.' (Surat al-Baqarah, 29)

Allah is said to have ordered the angels to build the Sacred House on the earth so that the children of Adam might seek refuge in it and circumambulate it, and so that Allah might be satisfied with them and forgive them. It is said that Adam was the one who built the Ka'bah when he was placed on earth. Allah said to him, 'Adam, build Me a house and circumambulate it as you have seen the angels circumambulating My Throne in heaven.' Allah is said to have sent the angel Jibril to show Adam the spot where it was to be built. Tradition further claims that the prophet Ibrahim and his son Isma'il rebuilt the same house over the existing foundations, as another ayah indicates: 'We gave to Ibrahim the site of the [Sacred] House.' (Surat al-Hajj, 24) Elsewhere it is stated that Ibrahim and Isma'il raised the foundations of the House, with the prayer:

'Our Lord! Accept [this service] from us: for You are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.'

'Ali ibn Abi Talib stated that when Allah commanded Ibrahim to build the Sacred House, Ibrahim migrated from Syria to Makkah accompanied by his wife and son Isma'il, and that Allah sent a wind with him to direct him. When they reached Makkah, the wind is said to have spoken to him and to have instructed him to build the Sacred Mosque over the site.

Imam Muslim said that the Ka'bah was built five times: firstly by angels, secondly by Ibrahim, thirdly by Quraysh, fourthly in the time of Ibn az-Zubayr, and fifthly in the time of al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf. While Muhammad, peace be upon him, was young and before he received prophethood, tradition records that the House was damaged. The clans of Quraysh then got together and rebuilt it. When they came to laying the cornerstone, there arose a dispute as to which chieftain was entitled to place it in the corner. It was decided that whoever entered the door of the Sacred Mosque the following morning should be asked about the matter and his advice acted on. It was Muhammad who walked in. He asked them to lay a sheet and place the stone on it. Then he told all the chiefs to grasp a corner of the sheet, lift the stone, and to bring it to the corner. Then Muhammad placed it in the corner, thereby resolving the dispute and uniting the people.

The building of the Ka'bah is seen as a succession of buildings and destructions. Thus, the Ka'bah was in the first instance built by angels. Then over the years the House was destroyed. When Adam was sent to dwell on earth, he was ordered by Allah to rebuild the Sacred House. Later, Nuh's Flood razed the Ka'bah to the ground. Then Ibrahim rebuilt and dedicated the Sacred House. The Qur'anic ayah: 'And [remember] when Ibrahim and Isma'il raised the foundations of the House', was interpreted as implying that Ibrahim and Isma'il raised the structure of the

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Ka'bah on existing foundations.

A largely parallel history exists traditionally for al-Aqsa Mosque. It was claimed that the angels built it forty years after the Sacred Mosque of the Ka'bah. Another account states that Adam also built al-Aqsa. Al-Bukhari related on the authority of Ibn Hisham that:

'After Adam had built the Ka'bah, he was ordered to go to al-Quds and build al-Aqsa Mosque (Bait al-Maqdis). Having built it, he offered a sacrifice to his Lord.'

It is also related that one of Adam's children built al-Aqsa Mosque forty years later. Again, it is related that Ibrahim, who used to travel between Sham and Makkah, also had a hand in building it. More specifically, it is said that Ya'qub, the son of Ishaq and grandson of Ibrahim, established it after Ibrahim had built the Ka'bah. Another narration tells how King Dawud was ordered to build the Mosque in al-Quds. He is said to have asked, 'O my Lord, where shall I build it?' and to have received the reply, 'In the place where you see the angel holding a sword.' So that is where he laid the foundation. The narrative tells how, when the Israelites had done wrong, Allah punished them with plague. So Dawud and his followers went out to pray to Allah to save them from the calamity. They prayed, prostrating themselves until Allah forgave them. Then Dawud ordered his followers to build a mosque, in the building of which he himself was also personally involved, on the site where their prayers had been answered. Dawud's son Sulayman is also reported to have had a hand in the building: see the hadith quoted above in Chapter 4 under The Merits of Prayer in al-Quds, which states that 'Sulayman, son of Dawud, completed the building of Bait al-Maqdis.'

The traditions of the Jews also claim that when Sulayman built the Temple in Jerusalem, he did so at a place which had been used from time immemorial as a place of worship. In the Jewish texts the focus of interest is on the great altar in the Temple. It

was claimed that this was located on the spot where Ibrahim had built the altar to sacrifice his son Ishaq (Genesis 22). But according to Targum Pseudo-Jonathan's translation of this passage, Ibrahim's altar was also not the first altar that had been built there. He simply repaired an altar which had been raised first by Adam, and then successively been destroyed and restored. Thus Targum Pseudo-Jonathan translates Genesis 22:9 as follows:

They [Abraham and Isaac] came to the place which God had told him of. Abraham built there the altar which Adam had built, but which had been destroyed in the waters of the Flood. Noah had rebuilt it, but it was again destroyed in the generation of the division of tongues. Abraham set in order the wood upon it, bound Isaac his son, and laid him upon the altar, upon the wood.

This clear 'genealogy' for the high altar in the Temple in Jerusalem is not easily paralleled elsewhere in Jewish tradition (it is missing from the other Targumim). Pseudo-Jonathan is a very late Targum, which was finally compiled in the Islamic era (it alludes to the Prophet Muhammad and his family). It has been suggested that its treatment of Genesis 22 is heavily polemical and contains both anti-Christian and anti-Islamic motifs. It is possible, therefore, that its author was aware of the Islamic traditions about the histories of the Ka'bah and of al-Aqsa Mosque as ancient places of worship, and that he was trying to assert the primacy of al-Quds.

Al-Quds as the First Qiblah in Islam

According to ahadith, when the prayers had been enjoined upon the Prophet Muhammad, after his ascension to heaven, he used to face in the direction of Bait al-Maqdis in al-Quds, which the Prophet took as the qiblah. When he migrated to Madinah, he continued to follow this practice for a period of seventeen months. Yet, in heart, he longed to turn his face toward the niche of Ibra-

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I prayed with the Prophet towards Bait al-Maqdis for about seventeen months and he very much wished that the House [the Ka'bah] was his qiblah, until Allah, exalted is He, revealed the following ayah: 'We see the turning of your face (for guidance) to the heavens: now shall We turn you towards a Qiblah that shall please you. Turn then your face in the direction of the sacred Mosque.' (Surat al-Baqarah, 144)

Al-Bara' ibn 'Azib also said, 'Until we were ordered to face the Ka'bah.' Ibn 'Umar narrated,

'When we were offering our dawn prayer in Quba', a man came to us and said, "Some Qur'an has been revealed to the Prophet and he has been ordered to face towards Makkah," and at that time our faces were turned towards Bait al-Maqdis.'

They immediately turned about to face the Ka'bah. So, while the Prophet was offering Salat adh-Dhuhr or Salat al-'Asr in the Mosque of Banu Salamah, the above ayah was revealed to him and he immediately turned his face from Bait al-Maqdis to the Ka'bah in Makkah, and the Companions followed his example. Thereafter, the Mosque of the Banu Salamah became known as Masjid Dhu'l-Qiblatain (the Mosque of the Two Prayer Directions). At that moment, the first qiblah was abrogated for all Muslims for all time.

It is clear from the Qur'an itself that the change of qiblah provoked controversy particularly among the Jews and the hypocrites who were their allies.

The fools among the people will say, "What has made them turn away from the direction they used to face?" Say, "To Allah belong both the east and the west. He guides whom-ever He wills to a straight path." Hence We have made

you a midmost nation, so that you will be witnesses against mankind and the Messenger will be a witness against you. We did not appoint the direction you used to face except to know him who follows the Messenger from him who turns back on his heels. Though in truth it is a very hard thing except for those whom Allah guides. Allah would not let your belief go to waste. Allah is All-Gentle, Most Merciful to mankind. (Surat al-Baqarah, 141-2)

The importance of the new qiblah is reaffirmed later in the same Surah:

From wherever you come out turn your face towards the Sacred Mosque. It is certainly the truth from your Lord. Allah is not heedless of what you do. From wherever you come out, turn your face to the Sacred Mosque. Wherever you are, turn your faces towards it so that people will have no argument against you, except for those among them who do wrong and then do not fear them but rather fear Me, and so that I can complete My blessing upon you so that perhaps you may be guided. (Surat al-Baqarah, 148-9)

Some of the Companions asked the Prophet concerning the fate of their brothers who had died before this command. In answer to this question, Allah revealed the following ayah: 'Allah would never let your belief (i.e. prayers) go to waste [i.e. those prayers offered towards Bait al-Maqdis].' So Bait al-Maqdis was the first qiblah for the Muslims while offering prayer.

Al-Quds as the place of the Prophet's Isra' and Mi'raj

Al-Quds was also the place from which the Prophet Muhammad ascended into heaven. The traditions regarding the Prophet's Mi'raj belong to a genre of ascension literature well known from Jewish and Christian sources, which is unsurprising to Muslims

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since many of the Prophets had similar experiences. It is noteworthy that in Islamic tradition the ascension is seen by some as a significant stage in the Messenger of Allah's divine commissioning as Prophet and Messenger, or at least as confirmation of his prophetic calling, and that this commissioning occurs, as with many earlier commissioning visions of other prophets, in al-Quds. The rich Islamic material has many parallels to sources of the Children of Israel and deserves extensive quotation. The following compilation draws together the main elements of the tradition.

Glory to the One who took His Slave for a Journey by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Farthest Mosque, whose precincts We blessed, – in order that We might show him some of Our Signs. (Surat al-Isra', 1)

Jabir ibn 'Abdullah heard the Prophet, peace be upon him, say, 'When Quraysh disbelieved me [about the Isra'], I stood up in al-Hijr [the unroofed part of the Ka'bah] and Allah displayed Bait al-Maqdis to me. So I began to describe its features to them whilst I was looking at it.'

Abu Hurairah said, 'On the night in which the Prophet, peace be upon him, was taken to Bait al-Maqdis, he was offered two cups, one containing wine, the other milk. He looked at them, then took the milk. Jibril said, "Praise be to Allah, who has guided you towards man's true nature (*fitrah*). If you had taken the wine, your Ummah would have gone astray".'

Malik ibn Sa'sa'ah said that the Prophet, peace be upon him, told him about the night in which he was taken on the night journey. He, peace be upon him, said,

'While I was lying down in al-Hatim [or al-Hijr], someone came to me and split open what is between this and this [he indicated the space from the top of his chest to

below his navel] and he took out my heart. Then a golden cup filled with faith was brought to me. My heart was washed, filled up [with faith], and put back in its place. A white beast, smaller than a mule, and bigger than a donkey, was brought to me [al-Buraq]. One stride of this creature covered a distance as far as it could see. I was mounted upon it.

Jibril set off with me until we reached the first heaven, and he asked for it to be opened. He was asked, "Who is there?" He said, "Jibril." The voice asked, "Who is with you?" He said, "Muhammad." The voice asked, "Has revelation been sent to him?" Jibril answered, "Yes." The voice said, "Welcome to him, blessed is the one who has come" – and the first heaven was opened. When I entered, there was Adam. Jibril said, "This is your father Adam; greet him." I greeted him, and he returned the greeting. Then he said, "Welcome to the righteous son and the righteous Prophet."

Then Jibril took me up until we reached the second heaven, and he asked for it to be opened. He was asked, "Who is there?" He said, "Jibril." The voice asked, "Who is with you?" He said, "Muhammad." The voice asked, "Has revelation been sent to him?" Jibril answered, "Yes." The voice said, "Welcome to him, blessed is the one who has come" – and the second heaven was opened. When I entered, there were Yahya and 'Isa, who were maternal cousins. Jibril said, "These are Yahya and 'Isa, greet them." So I greeted them and they returned the greeting. They said, "Welcome to the righteous brother and the righteous Prophet."

Then Jibril took me up until we reached the third heaven, and he asked for it to be opened. He was asked, "Who is there?" He said, "Muhammad." The voice asked, "Has revelation been sent to him?" Jibril answered, "Yes." The voice

said, "Welcome to him, blessed is the one who has come" – and the third heaven was opened.

'When I entered, there was Yusuf. Jibril said, "This is Yusuf, greet him." So I greeted him and he returned the greeting. Then he said, "Welcome to the righteous brother and the righteous Prophet."

'Then Jibril took me up until we reached the fourth heaven, and he asked for it to be opened. He was asked, "Who is there?" He said, "Jibril." The voice asked, "Who is with you?" He said, "Muhammad." The voice asked, "Has revelation been sent to him?" Jibril answered, "Yes." The voice said, "Welcome to him, blessed is he who has come" – and the fourth heaven was opened. When I entered, there was Idris. Jibril said, "This is Idris, greet him." So I greeted him and he returned the greeting. Then he said, "Welcome to the righteous brother and the righteous Prophet."

'Then Jibril took me up until we reached the fifth heaven, and he asked for it to be opened. He was asked, "Who is there?" He said, "Jibril." The voice asked, "Who is with you?" He said, "Muhammad." The voice asked, "Has revelation been sent to him?" Jibril answered, "Yes." The voice said, "Welcome to him, blessed is he who has come" – and the fifth heaven was opened. When I entered, there was Harun. Jibril said, "This is Harun, greet him." So I greeted him and he returned the greeting. Then he said, "Welcome to the righteous brother and the righteous Prophet."

'Then Jibril took me up until we reached the sixth heaven, and he asked for it to be opened. He was asked, "Who is there?" He said, "Jibril." The voice asked, "Who is with you?" He said, "Muhammad." The voice asked, "Has revelation been sent to him?" Jibril answered, "Yes." The voice said, "Welcome to him, blessed is he who has come" – and the sixth heaven was opened. When I entered, there was

Musa. Jibril said, "This is Musa, greet him." So I greeted him and he returned the greeting. Then he said, "Welcome to the righteous brother and the righteous Prophet." When I passed by him, he began to weep. He was asked, "Why do you weep?" He answered, "I weep because of a young man sent after me, whose Ummah will enter Paradise in greater numbers than mine."

'Then Jibril took me to the seventh heaven, and he asked for it to be opened. He was asked, "Who is there?" He said, "Jibril." The voice asked, "Who is with you?" He said, "Muhammad." The voice asked, "Has revelation been sent to him?" Jibril answered, "Yes." The voice said, "Welcome to him, blessed is he who has come" – and the seventh heaven was opened. When I entered, there was Ibrahim. Jibril said, "This is your father, greet him." So I greeted him and he returned the greeting. Then he said, "Welcome to the righteous son and the righteous Prophet."

'Then I was taken up to the Lote-tree of the Furthest Limit [Surat an-Najm 53: 14]. There were four rivers, two hidden and two visible. I asked, "What is this, O Jibril?" He said, "The two hidden rivers are rivers in Paradise. The two visible rivers are the Nile and the Euphrates."

'Then I was taken up to the "Much-Frequented House" (Surat at-Tur 52: 4). I was presented with three vessels, containing wine, milk, and honey. I chose the milk, so Jibril said, "This is the natural disposition (*fitrah*) of you and your Ummah."

'Then prayer (*Salat*) was made obligatory: fifty prayers every day. Then I returned and passed by Musa, who asked, "What have you been commanded to do?" I said, "I have been commanded to perform fifty prayers every day." He said, "Your Ummah will not be able to perform fifty prayers every day. By Allah, I tested the people before you and I

tried my utmost to reform the people of Israel. Go back to your Lord and ask Him to lighten the burden of your Ummah." So I went back and the number of prayers was reduced by ten [to forty]. I went back to Musa and he said the same as before. So I went back and the number of prayers was reduced by a further ten [to thirty]. I went back to Musa and he said the same as before. So I went back again and I was commanded to pray five times every day. I came back to Musa and he asked, "What have you been commanded to do?" I said, "To perform five prayers every day." Musa said, "Your Ummah will not be able to perform five prayers every day. I have tested the people before you and I tried my utmost to reform the people of Israel. Go back to your Lord and ask Him to lighten the burden of your Ummah." I said, "I asked my Lord until I felt ashamed. Now I am content and submit [to His Will]." When I passed by, a voice proclaimed, "I have confirmed My command and lightened the burden of My slaves."

Another report says:

'Whilst I was lying down in the vicinity of the Ka'bah, half-asleep and half-awake, two men came to me. One brought a golden vessel filled with wisdom and faith. He opened up the space between the top of my chest to below my navel, then he washed my heart [lit. stomach] with Zamzam water and filled it with wisdom and faith.'

With reference to the Much-Frequented House, this report adds, 'I asked Jibril about it and he said, "Every day, seventy thousand angels pray in it and, when they leave, another seventy thousand come." He took me up to the Lote-tree of the Furthest Limit; its fruits were like the pitchers of Hajar and its leaves were like the ears of elephants ...'" The end of this report adds, 'It was proclaimed, "I have confirmed My command, lightened the burden of My slaves, and increased the reward [for the prayers] tenfold."

With regard to the ayah '... We granted the vision which We showed you, but as a trial for men...' (Surat al-Isra', 60), Ibn 'Abbas said, 'The vision was something which the Prophet, peace be upon him, actually saw with his physical eyes. It was shown to him on the night when he was taken to Bait al-Maqdis. "The Accursed Tree", [mentioned] in the Qur'an (Surat al-Isra', 60), is the tree of Zaqqum [a tree in Hell which has bitter fruit].'

Abu Dharr reported that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said:

'When I was at Makkah, the roof of my house was opened and Jibril descended. He opened my chest and washed it with Zamzam water. He brought a golden vessel filled with wisdom and faith, poured them into my chest, then closed it up. Then he took my hand and led me up to the first heaven. When I reached the first heaven, Jibril said to the gatekeeper, "Open the gate." The gatekeeper asked, "Who is there?" He said, "Jibril," The gatekeeper asked, "Is there anyone with you?" Jibril said, "Yes, Muhammad is with me." The gatekeeper asked, "Has revelation been sent to him?" Jibril said, "Yes." When the gate was opened, we passed over the first heaven. We saw a man sitting, with a multitude of people on his right and left. When he looked towards the right, he laughed and when he looked towards the left, he wept. He said, "Welcome to the righteous Prophet and the righteous son." I asked, "Who is this?" Jibril answered, "This is Adam, and the multitudes on his right and left are the souls of his descendants. Those on his right are the people of the Garden, those on his left are the people of the Fire. So when he looks to his right, he laughs and when he looks to his left, he weeps."

'Then Jibril took me up to the second heaven and said to its gatekeeper, "Open the gate." The gatekeeper asked him the same questions as the first gatekeeper and received the same replies. Then he opened the gate.'

Abu Dharr added that the Prophet, peace be upon him, met Adam, Idris, Musa, 'Isa, and Ibrahim, but he did not mention in which heavens they were, apart from stating that the Prophet, peace be upon him, met Adam in the first heaven and Ibrahim in the sixth heaven.

Anas said:

'When Jibril brought the Prophet, peace be upon him, past Idris, the latter said, "Welcome to the righteous Prophet and the righteous brother." The Prophet, peace be upon him, asked, "Who is this?" Jibril said, "This is Idris." Then he passed by Musa, who said, "Welcome to the righteous Prophet and the righteous brother." The Prophet, peace be upon him, asked, "Who is this?" Jibril answered, "This is Musa." Then he passed by 'Isa, who said, "Welcome to the righteous Prophet and the righteous brother." The Prophet, peace be upon him, asked, "Who is this?" Jibril answered, "This is 'Isa." Then he passed by Ibrahim, who said, "Welcome to the righteous Prophet and the righteous son." The Prophet, peace be upon him, asked, "Who is this?" Jibril answered, "This is Ibrahim, upon whom be peace."

The Prophet, peace be upon him, added, 'Then Jibril took me up to a place where I heard the scratching of the pens [which write the decrees].'

Ibn Hazm and Anas ibn Malik reported that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said:

'Allah enjoined fifty prayers on my Ummah. When I was returning with this command, I passed by Musa, who asked me, "What has Allah enjoined upon your Ummah?" I said, "He has enjoined fifty prayers." Musa said, "Go back to your Lord, for your Ummah will not be able to bear it." So I went back to my Lord and He reduced the number of

prayers by half. I went back to Musa and said, "It has been reduced by half." Musa said, "Go back to your Lord, for your Ummah will not be able to bear it." So I went back and the number was reduced by half again. I returned to Musa and again he said, "Go back to your Lord, for your Ummah will not be able to bear it." So I went back to Him and He said, "They are five prayers but they are equal in reward to fifty, for My word does not change." I returned to Musa, who said, "Go back to your Lord again." But I said, "I feel ashamed to ask my Lord again." Then Jibril took me up as far as the Lote-tree of the Furthest Limit; it was veiled in indescribable colours. Then I was granted admission to Paradise, where I saw nets made of pearls, and its earth was of musk."

Sharik ibn 'Abd Allah said,

'I heard Anas ibn Malik say: "On the night of the Isra', when the Prophet, peace be upon him, was taken from the Ka'bah, three people came to him before revelation was sent to him, whilst he was sleeping in Masjid al-Haram [the Mosque of Makkah]. The first of them said, 'Which one is he?' The middle one said, 'He is the best of them.' One of them said, 'Take the best of them.' That night they did no more. They came back to take him on another night, which is when he saw them whilst his heart was awake and could see, although his eye slept, for this is a characteristic of all Prophets; whilst their eyes sleep their hearts are awake and aware. They did not speak to him, but carried him to the well of Zamzam. Jibril was in charge of them and he split open the Prophet's chest, peace be upon him. Then he washed it with Zamzam water until his heart was made pure. Then he brought a golden vessel, full of faith and wisdom, and emptied it into his heart until it overflowed. Then Jibril closed up his chest and took him up to the first

heaven, where he knocked on one of its gates.

“The people of the first heaven asked, ‘Who is there?’ He said, ‘Jibril.’ They asked, ‘Who is with you?’ Jibril said, ‘Muhammad is with me.’ They asked, ‘Has revelation been sent to him?’ Jibril said, ‘Yes.’ They said, ‘Then welcome to him, welcome.’ They welcomed him joyfully, although the people of heaven do not know what Allah wills on earth until He informs them. The Prophet, peace be upon him, found Adam in the first heaven. Jibril said, ‘This is your father, greet him.’ So the Prophet greeted him and Adam returned the greeting. Then he said, ‘Welcome, O my son, and what an excellent son you are!’

“There were two rivers running through the first heaven. The Prophet, peace be upon him, asked, ‘What are these rivers, Jibril?’ Jibril answered, ‘They are the essence of the Nile and Euphrates.’ Then Jibril took him through the first heaven, where they saw another river, above which stood a castle made of pearls and chrysolite. The Prophet, peace be upon him, struck it with his hand and found it was pungent musk. He asked, ‘What is this, Jibril?’ Jibril answered, ‘This is al-Kawthar, which your Lord is keeping for you.’

“Then Jibril took him up to the second heaven, where the angels asked similar questions to those asked by the angels in the first heaven. They asked, ‘Who is there?’ Jibril said, ‘Jibril.’ The angels asked, ‘Who is with you?’ Jibril answered, ‘Muhammad.’ They asked, ‘Has revelation been sent to him?’ Jibril said, ‘Yes.’ So they said, ‘Then welcome to him.’

“Then Jibril took him to the third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh heavens. In each heaven the angels asked the same questions. In each heaven there were prophets also. The Prophet, peace be upon him, named them and I [i.e. Anas ibn Malik, the narrator of the hadith to Sharik ibn

‘Abd Allah] remembered only some of them: Idris in the second heaven, Harun in the fourth, another – whose name I did not remember – in the fifth, Ibrahim in the sixth, and Musa in the seventh, by virtue of the fact that Allah spoke to Him. Musa said, ‘My Lord, I did not think that You would raise anyone above me.’

“Then Jibril took him higher, to regions which are unknown to all except Allah, until they reached the Lote-tree of the Furthest Limit. Then Allah the Almighty drew near, until He was very close indeed, and revealed the command: ‘Fifty prayers, day and night, are prescribed for your Ummah.’

“Then the Prophet, peace be upon him, came back down, until he reached Musa, who stopped him and said, ‘Muhammad, what has your Lord enjoined upon you?’ The Prophet, peace be upon him, said, ‘He has enjoined fifty prayers, day and night, upon me.’ Musa said, ‘Verily, your Ummah will not be able to bear it. Go back and ask your Lord to lighten the burden for yourself and your Ummah.’ The Prophet, peace be upon him, turned to Jibril, as if asking for advice. Jibril indicated that he was prepared to go back if that was what the Prophet, peace be upon him, wanted. So he took him back up. The Prophet, peace be upon him, said, ‘Lord, lighten our load, for my Ummah will not be able to bear it.’ So Allah reduced the number of prayers by ten. Then the Prophet, peace be upon him, went back to Musa, who stopped him again and sent him back several times until the number of prayers was reduced to five.

“Then Musa stopped him again and said, ‘Muhammad, I urged my people, Bani Isra’il, to do less than this, but they were weak and neglected their duty. Your Ummah is weaker in body and heart, sight and hearing. Go back and ask

your Lord to lighten the load.' The Prophet, peace be upon him, again turned to Jibril for advice. He did not object and took him back up for the fifth time. The Prophet, peace be upon him, said, 'My Lord, my Ummah are weak in body and heart. Pray, lighten our load.' Allah said, 'Muhammad.' The Prophet, peace be upon him, said, 'Here I am, at Your service.' Allah said, 'My Word does not change. It must remain as it was decided in the "Source of the Decrees" [*Umm al-Kitab*; cf. Surat az-Zukhruf, 4]. Every good deed will have a tenfold reward. The number of prayers prescribed in the Source of Decrees is fifty, but you are obliged to perform only five [as each carries a tenfold reward].'

"The Prophet, peace be upon him, returned to Musa, who asked, 'What happened?' The Prophet, peace be upon him, said, 'Allah has lightened our load and has given us a tenfold reward for every good deed.' Musa said, 'By Allah, I urged Banu Isra'il to do less than that and they failed. Go back to your Lord and ask Him to reduce the number still further.' But the Prophet, peace be upon him, said, 'Musa, by Allah, I feel ashamed before my Lord of disputing with Him.' Musa said, 'Then go down in the name of Allah'... Then the Prophet, peace be upon him, woke up in Masjid al-Haram."

The literal meaning of Isra' is 'to start a journey by night', but in this context it refers specifically to the journey which the Prophet took from the Sacred Mosque in Makkah to the Farthest Mosque in Jerusalem. Mi'raj means 'going up', but in this context it means the ascension of the Prophet Muhammad into the heavens.

According to tradition, when Muhammad, peace be upon him, first received the gift of prophecy, he faced opposition from his people, who denied his prophetic call, calling him a liar, a magi-

cian, and a poet. When he visited the tribe in at-Ta'if to proclaim his message, he was rejected, stoned by children, and driven out of the town. Shortly afterwards, his wife Khadijah died, his uncle and protector Abu Talib passed away, both of which events caused him great suffering. The heavenly journey which happened at this time came as a means of uplifting his spirit and confirming his call. This journey took place at a critical time, when Muhammad had come to despair of making the Quraysh believe in Allah. He prayed:

O Allah, I complain to You of my weakness, inability, and people's belittlement of me. O Allah, the Most Merciful, You are the Lord. Do you trust me to a non-relative who frowns at me or an enemy whom you have allowed to domineer over me – unless You are angry with me? I do not care, Your mercy being much wider. I seek refuge in the light of your illuminating countenance. Do not be angry with me or resentful of me. My apologies I present before You for Your satisfaction. There is no power save in You.

The journey commenced from the Great Mosque in Makkah and terminated in Bait al-Maqdis, where the Prophet ascended from the Rock into heaven (see figure 4.1)

The tradition, as we have set it out above, raises some obvious questions, which require clarification. These are:

- i) Were the Isra' and Mi'raj only a spiritual journey and ascension, or were there actual physical events involving Muhammad's body?
- ii) Did the Isra' and Mi'raj occur only once, or more than once?
- iii) When did the Isra' and Mi'raj take place?
- iv) Did the Prophet offer prayers at Bait al-Maqdis?
- v) Did he actually see Allah?

Were the Isra' and Mi'raj only a spiritual journey and ascension, or were they actual physical events involving the Messenger of Allah's body?

There are two opinions among the Muslim authorities this question.

a) It was only a spiritual experience

This was the view taken by Mu'awiyah, 'A'ishah, Ibn Ishaq, and al-Hasan al-Basri, who based their view on the Qur'anic ayah, 'We granted the vision We showed you, but as a trial for men.' They argued that here the experience is called a vision, which can only occur in dream.



Figure 4.1

However, the above ayah does not mention the ascension (*Mi'raj*), but only the Isra', thus indicating to some that the ascension was a spiritual experience of the Prophet. Also, the saying of 'A'ishah, 'The Prophet never left me', would indicate that he never left her side bodily, if there were not serious doubt about this hadith since it is agreed that the event took place before 'A'ishah took up residence with the Prophet, peace be upon him, as his wife.

These people also base their view on the hadith of Sharik ibn 'Abdillah, who reported:

I heard Anas ibn Malik say, 'On the night of the Isra', when the Prophet, peace be upon him, was taken from the Ka'bah, three people came to him before revelation was sent to him, whilst he was sleeping in Masjid al-Haram [the Mosque of Makkah]. The first of them said, "Which one is he?" The middle one said, "He is the best of them." One of them said, "Take the best of them." That night they did no more. They came back to take him on another night, which is when he saw them whilst his heart was awake and could see, although his eye slept, for this is a characteristic of all Prophets; whilst their eyes sleep their hearts are awake and aware.'

b) These were actual physical events involving the Messenger of Allah's body

The majority opinion of the Muslim authorities is that the Isra' and Mi'raj were performed by the body and soul of the Messenger of Allah while he was awake. They support their view, first, by observing that the opening word of Surat al-Isra', 1, i.e. *subhan* (glory be), is usually applied to something great, miraculous, or important, so that if it were only a dream that is recounted in the following words, *subhan* would be an inappropriate introduction. The words closely following, *bi-'abdihi* (His slave) must indicate the body and soul of the Messenger of Allah, just as Nuh, both body and soul, is similarly referred to as 'abd in

ayah 3: 'Truly he was a most grateful slave.' Furthermore, in ayah 60 of this Surah, the event is referred to as a 'trial' (*fitnah*) ('We granted the Vision which We showed thee, but as a trial for men'), which again would be inappropriate if it were only a dream.

Regarding the hadith narrated by Sharik, which suggests that the event took place in the Messenger of Allah's spirit while his body was sleeping, it has been observed that Sharik had a weak memory and fell into error in his narration, as for example when he asserted that the three people came to Muhammad before revelation was granted to him. This contradicts the view of all other authorities that the ascension took place after the Messenger of Allah became a Prophet. An-Nawawi specifically notes this error in Sharik's narration as an example of his unreliability. The scholars agree, he said, that prayer was enjoined upon the Ummah during the night of Isra', so how could it have occurred before the revelation had been sent to the Prophet? In addition, at the time of the ascension, 'A'ishah was still young and living with her parents, so how could she have narrated her hadith as if she had then been the wife of the Prophet?

If the Isra' and Mi'raj had been only a spiritual experience, no one would have needed to advise him, 'Do not tell the people because they will disbelieve you,' i.e. with regard to the physical impossibility of the event. When the Messenger of Allah told the people, they did disbelieve him. They said, 'Muhammad claims that he has been to Jerusalem and back in one night, yet our camels take one month to complete this journey!' If the Prophet had said that he dreamt about this great event, they would have believed him. As the disbelievers felt sure that the Messenger of Allah had never been to al-Aqsa Mosque, they asked him to describe it, but in reply he started to describe the mosque to them in detail. As we have already noted above, Jabir ibn 'Abdullah is reported to have heard the Prophet saying, 'When Quraysh disbelieved me [about the Isra'], I stood up in al-Hijr [the unroofed

part of the Ka'bah] and Allah displayed Bait al-Maqdis to me. So I began to describe its features to them whilst I was looking at it.' Surat an-Najm, ayah 17 says, '(His) sight never swerved, nor did it go wrong!' The sight is, of course, a part of the body.

As further evidence, the Prophet told the people about the caravan he had sighted which was coming from Syria. He described the leading camel and suggested when it should reach Makkah that they should verify it. Then Allah revealed Surat an-Najm, 1-18 to the Messenger.

Concerning Surat al-Isra (also known as Bani Isra'il), ayah 60 ('We granted the Vision which We showed thee, but as a trial for men...'), scholars observed that the word 'vision' (*ar-ru'ya*) indicates actual sight and cannot refer to a dream. When Ibn 'Abbas was asked concerning the vision, he said that this sighting was done by the Prophet whilst awake and not while he was asleep.

Further, the Prophet rode on al-Buraq. If this had been a dream and not a physical experience, he would not have ridden on al-Buraq. In the hadith, it is also mentioned that al-Buraq was tethered to a hitching-post, a detail which again points to a physical rather than spiritual experience. The Prophet is reported to have said, 'A white beast, smaller than a mule, and bigger than a donkey, was brought to me. One stride of this creature covered a distance as far as it could see. I was mounted upon it' Another hadith reports that the Prophet said, 'I tied al-Buraq to the same hitching-post which had been used by the earlier prophets.'

Other hadiths report that the Prophet also led the other prophets in prayer, and that from the rock he ascended into the heavens.

To summarise the evidence brought to support the view that the Isra' and Mi'raj were physical rather than merely spiritual experiences, it is observed that he rode on al-Buraq; that he led the prayers in Jerusalem; that when he ascended into heaven he met earlier prophets like Adam, Ibrahim, Musa, and 'Isa; that he

reached the Lote-tree and saw the angel Jibril in his original form with six hundred wings; that he saw the 'Much-Frequented House'; that he saw the Garden and the Fire; that Allah enjoined fifty daily prayers on his Ummah, which were later reduced to five; and that he returned from Makkah on the very same night.

It has been suggested that the two interpretations of the story might be reconciled by supposing that the Isra' and the Mi'raj happened more than once. In the first instance, they happened physically, but were repeated later spiritually.

It is interesting to note that in the Jewish ascension literature the same problem arises as to whether or not the ascent of certain prophets was meant to be physical, or only spiritual in a dream or vision. Thus in the First Book of Enoch, Enoch (Idris) appears to have ascended only in a dream state: his physical body remained on his bed in his house. In the Second Book of Enoch, however, the ascension is unquestionably physical and leads to the bodily transformation of Enoch.

When did the Isra' and Mi'raj take place?

There is some difference of opinion in the traditions as to when in the life of the Messenger of Allah the Night Journey took place. Ibn Shihab az-Zuhri said that it took place one year before the Hijrah. Some others suggested that it occurred eight months, or perhaps six months, before the Hijrah. Ibn Hazm stated that it took place in the month of Rajab of the twelfth year of prophethood. Others again suggested that it occurred one year and two months, or perhaps one year and three months, before the Hijrah. Adh-Dhahabi suggested eighteen months before the Hijrah, while Mujir ad-Din al-Hanbali said that it happened on the 27th Rajab.

Notwithstanding this variety of opinion, they all agree that the Isra' and Mi'raj took place before the Hijrah and after the Prophet had received his prophetic call. The ahadith report that at the gates of each heaven the angels of heaven asked whether the

Prophet had received the revelation and that Jibril replied each time, 'Yes.' The authorities also agree that prayers became obligatory for the Prophet and for Muslims in Makkah on the night of the Isra' and Mi'raj. In the hadith it is mentioned that Allah enjoined fifty daily prayers upon Muslims and then reduced the tally to five.

Did the Prophet actually see Allah?

Here again there are differences of opinion among the authorities. Ibn 'Abbas, Ka'b, al-Hasan al-Basri, Abu Hurairah, and Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal say that the Prophet saw Allah. They base their opinion on the hadith:

Jibril took him into heaven until they reached the Lote-tree of the Furthest Limit. Then He drew near until He was very close indeed. He saw the 'Much-Frequented House'. He was raised beyond this point until 'Then he drew near and hung suspended. He was two bows'-length away or even nearer.' (Surat an-Najm: 8-9).

When Imam Ahmad was asked, 'Did the Prophet see his Lord,' he replied, 'He saw Him, he saw Him, he saw Him.' Also, the Prophet himself was asked whether he saw Allah and he replied in the affirmative.

However, 'A'ishah, Ibn Mas'ud, and 'Uthman ibn Sa'id ad-Darimi denied this and said that Muhammad never actually physically saw Allah. When Abu Dharr asked the Prophet, 'Did you see your Lord?' he replied, 'I saw a brilliant light.' In another hadith, he is said to have replied, 'How could I see Him when I was dazed?'

In reply to the interpretation of the Qur'anic words, 'He was two bows'-lengths away or even closer,' adopted by the first group of scholars, those who argued that the Prophet could not have actually have seen Allah, said that the words 'he came closer' meant that the Prophet came closer to Jibril and they added that

he saw him in his original form with six hundred wings. This was the second occasion on which the Prophet had actually seen Jibril, as is indicated by the later words in Surat an-Najm, 13 f.: '...he saw Him another time near the Lote-tree of the Furthest Limit.' The first time that the Prophet had seen Jibril in his true form was at the cave of Hira', when he received the mantle of prophethood. On that occasion Jibril had spoken, 'Proclaim! (or Read! – Iqra') in the name of your Lord who created – created man out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood: Proclaim! And your Lord is the Most Generous who taught (the use of) the Pen, taught man that which he did not know.' Thus, Ibn Mas'ud said that the Prophet saw Jibril twice: the first time at the commencement of his prophethood and the second time near the Lote-tree.

The second view certainly agrees with the apparent meaning often derived from the following ayah that no man can actually see Allah: 'The eyes do not grasp Him,' and 'It is not fitting for a man that Allah should speak to him except by revelation, or from behind a veil, or by the sending of a Messenger to reveal, with Allah's permission, what Allah wills: for He is Most High, Most Wise.' Yet the former ayat is also interpreted to mean that vision cannot totally comprehend or encompass Allah. The interpretation denying the vision of Allah accords with Jewish tradition, which also claims that no man can see Allah and live, and that Allah is without physical form. In Jewish ascension stories a prophet at the climax of an ascent usually sees only a representation of Allah – a bright light, or even an empty throne.

However, in explanation of the Prophet's words, 'I saw my Lord,' it is pointed out that when the Prophet was late for prayer in Madinah, he informed the congregation that he had seen his Lord in vision, as before.

Did the Prophet offer Prayer in Bait al-Maqdis?

The traditions strongly agree that the Prophet did himself lead

the other prophets in prayer. The question arises, When was the prayer offered – before or after the ascension? Some hadiths say that he offered two rak'ahs alone, then he was taken up to heaven, and, at the gates of each of the heavens, the guardians inquired of Jibril who was accompanying him, with the subsequent welcoming of the Prophet. He was introduced to other prophets like Adam, Ibrahim, 'Isa the son of Maryam, Idris, and Musa, and, on his return to earth, he once again offered two rak'ahs as the imam of other prophets. Another hadith says that when he reached the sacred mosque of al-Aqsa, the prophets were already there and that he led them in the two rak'ah prayers:

I entered the mosque where the other prophets were gathered and they were lining up awaiting my arrival. I asked Jibril who they were. He said, 'These are prophets and messengers. Quraysh associate partners with Allah and the Christians claim that Allah has an equal.' Then Jibril requested the Prophet Muhammad to ask the gathered congregation, 'Does Allah have any partner or associate?'

Jibril recited an ayah which Abu'l-Qasim al-Hasan ibn Muhammad ibn Habib, an interpreter of revelation, said was revealed to the Messenger of Allah in Bait al-Maqdis.

This view assumes that the prayer took place before the ascension, but the first view says that it was after the ascension that the two rak'ah prayers were performed. A study of the ahadith, however, has led some to suggest that the Prophet actually offered the prayers twice. In the first instance, he offered the prayer by himself, prior to his ascension, and, on his return, he offered the prayer as imam of the other prophets.

According to tradition there were four blessings received by the Prophet on the night of his ascension, viz:

- i) Obligatory prayers. This spiritual worship is a means of communion between the believer and his Lord.

- ii) Forgiveness of major wrong actions through repentance.
- iii) Multiplication of the reward for good deeds, so that whoever intends to perform a good deed and carries out his proposed action will be rewarded ten times over, while whoever intends to do good but does not act upon his intention will receive the reward of only one good deed. Whoever intends to perform a bad deed and acts upon it will be accountable for one wrong action, while whoever intends to perform a bad deed but does not act upon his intention will be rewarded for one good deed.
- iv) Allah revealed the last three ayat from Surat al-Baqarah 284-286:

To Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth. Whether you show what is in your selves or conceal it, Allah will take you to account for it. So then He will forgive whom He will, and punish whom He will. For Allah has power over all things. The Messenger believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, as do the believers. Each one (of them) believes in Allah, His angels, His books, and His Messengers. 'We make no distinction (they say) between any of His Messengers.' And they say: 'We hear, and we obey: (we seek) Your forgiveness, our Lord, and to You is the end of all journeys. Allah does not place a burden greater than it can bear upon any self. It gets every good that it earns, and it suffers every ill that it earns. (Pray:) 'Our Lord! Condemn us not if we forget or fall into error; our Lord! lay not on us a burden like that which You laid on those before us: our Lord! lay not on us a burden greater than we have strength to bear. Pardon us, forgive us and have mercy on us. You are our Master; help us to victory against the disbelievers.' (Surat al-Baqarah, 284-286)

The Conquest of Bait al-Maqdis by the Caliph 'Umar (the Re-Islamisation of Jerusalem)

After 'Umar succeeded to the Caliphate, he appointed Abu 'Ubaidah al-Jarrah as commander of the expeditionary forces in Syria. After the victory of al-Yarmuk in AD 636, the latter entered Damascus, Hims, Aleppo, and al-Ladhiqiyyah (Latakia), whereupon he wrote a letter to inform Caliph 'Umar about the conquest of these cities. At the same time, he sent a note to the Patriarch of Bait al-Maqdis, requiring him either to accept Islam or pay the poll tax (*jizyah*). When he received no answer, he besieged the city for approximately four months, after which the inhabitants of al-Quds demanded peace on condition that it should be concluded at the hands of Caliph 'Umar ibn al-Khattab himself. 'Umar travelled to Palestine and formally received the key of the city. On his arrival, he concluded a treaty with the people of Jerusalem, the text of which read as follows:

This is the pledge given by the slave of Allah 'Umar the Amir al-Mu'minin, to the inhabitants of Aelia (al-Quds). A pledge to themselves and their belongings, churches, crosses, old and new and to all the followers of their creed. Their churches are not to be destroyed, wholly or in part and their areas are not to be forced to abjure their religion. None of them are to be harmed. No Jews are to dwell in Jerusalem in accordance with the wishes of the Patriarch. The inhabitants of Aelia have to pay tribute (*Jizyah*), as the inhabitants of Ctesiphon do. They have to dismiss the Romans and robbers. Those who quit it are to be safe as regards themselves and their properties, till they reach their place of safety. Those who stay are safe as they have to pay tribute imposed on the inhabitants of Aelia. The people of Aelia who would like to join [the] Romans with their properties and quit their chapels and crosses are safe. As regards their lives, they are granted safety till they reach their des-

tinuation. Any citizen of Aelia is free to stay, join [the] Romans, or return to his family. Those who choose to stay have to pay the poll tax like the citizens. Nothing is to be taken off them till they gather their harvest. Should they pay their poll tax (*jizyah*), they will have the pledge of Allah, His Messenger, and the believers as regards the fulfilment of this treaty.

This treaty was witnessed by Khalid ibn al-Walid, 'Amr ibn al-'As, 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn 'Awf, and Mu'awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan. Caliph 'Umar entered Jerusalem peacefully and asked the Patriarch to show him the site of Dawud's Mosque. He was taken to the Holy Church of the Sepulchre. There 'Umar examined the church and compared it with the description of al-Aqsa Mosque that had been given by the Prophet Muhammad after his return journey from the heavens. He found nothing resembling the description that had been given by the Prophet and he told the Patriarch that this was not the right mosque.

The time for prayer came and 'Umar told the Patriarch that he wished to offer his prayer. 'Pray where you are,' said the Patriarch, meaning in the church, but 'Umar refused and prayed alone on the steps outside the entrance to the church (see Figure 4.1). When he had finished praying, he explained to the Patriarch, 'Had I prayed inside the church, the Muslims coming after me would take possession of it, saying that I had prayed in it.'

He was then taken to another site, which he compared with the description given by the Prophet, and he found the Rock covered with rubbish. He cleared the Rock with the help of other Muslims. They washed and tidied the place. Then they walked further, near to the niche of Dawud, and offered two rak'ah prayers in the first of which 'Umar recited Surah Sad (38) and in the second of which he recited Surat al-Isra' (17), containing reference to the Isra' and Mi'raj.

Then he asked Ka'b al-Ahbar, 'Where should I build the *mihrab* (prayer niche)?' 'Behind the Rock,' replied Ka'b, 'so that you will offer it behind the two qiblahs,' i.e. the qiblah of Musa and the qiblah of Muhammad. 'Umar said to Ka'b, 'You speak like the Jews. We will build the niche in front of the Rock. The entire site is part of the mosque. Therefore, our niche should be in the best part, which is in the front portion.'

It is clear from a careful reading of the Muslim traditions that 'Umar's capture of Jerusalem is seen not so much as a conquest but as a reconquest and as a restoration of the Holy City to its original true faith. When the Muslim forces entered the city it was under Christian control, and the centre of Christian religious life was the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which was located on the cardo of Hadrian's city of Aelia. The old Jewish Temple area was in ruins and totally neglected. This is well illustrated by the famous Christian mosaic map of the Holy Land in the Church of St. George in Madaba in Jordan, which depicts the city as an oval with the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at its centre (its navel). Though the map is damaged, it is nonetheless reasonably clear that the Temple area did not feature on it. 'Umar rejects the Christian centre and instead recovers an older place of worship on the Temple Mount, one linked to the older prophets, one which the Prophet Muhammad himself had visited on his night journey. He clears it of rubbish and re-dedicates it to the worship of Allah. What is being subtly implied is a process not of 'Islamisation' but of 're-Islamisation'.



Figure 4.2. shows the mosque of Umar which was erected on the spot where Umar performed his prayer.

Chapter 5

The Day of Judgement and Jerusalem in Judaism

The Apocalyptic Movement and its Literature

Judaism, unlike Zoroastrianism, developed a linear view of history. It came to hold that history was not cyclical, but was moving forward purposefully towards a grand finale. The earliest expression of this is to be found in the relics of the teachings of the Hebrew Prophets. [It must be remembered that genuine Prophets all warned mankind of the Day of Judgement after death. However, the Jews corrupted their revelations and seem largely to have interpreted the Day of Judgement as a historical day at the end of time when Allah would give them power on the earth – Ed.] The prophets in condemning the sins and apostasy of the people from the covenant warned of a coming day of judgment – often referred to as ‘the day of the Lord’. However the Jews seem to have viewed it as a day when Allah would intervene decisively in human affairs to judge His people, to enforce the terms of his covenant with Israel, to punish the wicked and to reward the righteous. The language, to those in doubt of the Day of Judgement, can seem vague but threatening: it was simply a matter of ‘the day of the Lord’ or ‘that Day’. Increasingly, however, the descriptions of the ‘Day’ became more precise and dramatic, the rhetorical expression of it ever more extreme:

That day is a day of wrath, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and darkness, a day of the trumpet and alarm, against the fenced cities, and against the high battlements. And I will

bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord: and their blood shall be poured out as dust and their flesh as dung. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of God's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of His jealousy: for He shall make an end, yea a terrible end, of all that dwell in the land.

To a Muslim reading the above it is clearly an apocalyptic description of the Last Day after death. However, the Jews seem to have come to view it as a historical day at the end of time. 'That day' would bring not only judgment and disaster, but also consolation and the fulfilment of hope. Righteous individuals would be vindicated and Israel, as a people, would be delivered from her enemies and oppressors. The ensuing era of peace and prosperity came to be seen by some of the prophets essentially as a reversal of the fall, a restoration of paradise and of the idyllic conditions that existed, or were imagined to have existed, at the beginning of history. The beginning and the end of time were made to correspond:

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the basilisk's den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

A further element was woven into this picture of the end of history with the emergence of the doctrine of the Messiah in Judaism. There is no doubt that the early revelations of the Prophets foretold the coming of the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless

him and grant him peace. However, it seems clear that over the centuries the Jews interpreted this prophecy to mean a great prophet and ruler of the Jews who would lead them into victory over their enemies. According to this evolved doctrine, a king of the House of Dawud would in the future reunite the two halves of the people, which at that time were Judah and Israel. By and large the Tribes of Israel vanished from history leaving only Judah (from which 'Jew' derives) a remnant of whom might possibly exist among the Sephardim. The Messiah was supposed to defeat Israel's enemies and restore her political independence and her fortunes. The doctrine of the Messiah was the result not only of a natural longing for national self-determination and of nostalgia for the prosperity and power of the days of King Dawud. It was a result also of a theological crisis. The Dawudic dynasty had been supported by a number of prophetic oracles which seemed to promise that the House of Dawud was a particular object of divine favour and that the Dawudic dynasty would rule over Israel for ever:

When thy [David's] days be fulfilled, I will set up thy seed after thee ... and I will establish his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son ... My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thy house and thy kingdom shall be made sure for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.

These confident predictions, no doubt issued at the height of Dawud's and Sulayman's power, were dramatically negated by later historical events. The Dawudic empire crumbled and its successor, the Kingdom of Judah, finally and irrevocably lost its independence in 586 BCE when it was defeated by the Babylonians and incorporated into their empire. One way, however, to save the promises was to predict the coming in the future of an 'Anointed One' (Messiah) of the line of Dawud who would fi-

nally bring them to fulfilment. Tragically, the truth of the prophecies – which was the coming of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and Islam's shattering of the Byzantines and the Persians, the great successor empires to the Babylonians – was ignored and deliberately rejected in favour of the unlikely emergence of a revitalised biblical Israeli nation.

The major outlines of Jewish eschatology were all in place in the pre-exilic prophets. It was in the post-exilic era, however, that the various strands were woven together into an elaborate and increasingly detailed and precise scenario of the end of history, one in which the city of Jerusalem would play a central part. The key transitional figures were the exilic prophets known as 'Second' Isaiah and Ezekiel. The latter, in particular, offered a detailed description of the restored Temple in Jerusalem and of the last great battle with the eschatological enemy of Israel, Gog of the land of Magog. Scenarios of the end became a major motif of the apocalyptic literature. An apocalypse involved the revelation of secrets to a 'prophet' who was often a hero from Israel's past. A typical pattern involved the 'prophet' being granted a vision of heaven, or ascending into heaven, and seeing the Throne of Allah, and then having mysteries revealed to him. Often a guiding angel played a part in the revelation, by giving a commentary on the wonders which the prophet saw. These mysteries related either to the workings of creation or to the end of history.

The classic early apocalypse is the Book of Daniel. This offers two cryptic schemas of history, culminating in the establishment of the kingdom of God. The first is contained in Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the image with the head of gold, the breast and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, the legs of iron and the feet part of iron and of clay (Chapter 2), the second in the vision of the four beasts, representing four successive world empires (Chapter 7). Similar cryptic schemes of history are found in the First Book of Enoch.

The apocalyptic movement, with its visions of the end of time, made a profound impression on Jewish thought, and their scenarios of the end have, in broad outline remained a part of the Jewish worldview down to modern times. However, interest in these ideas fluctuated over time and was affected by historical events. There appears to have been strong interest in apocalyptic thought at the time of the Maccabean revolt against the Greeks in the second century BCE. The Book of Daniel probably belongs to this period. There was again an upsurge of interest in apocalyptic in the mid first century CE at the time of the first revolt against Rome (66-74 CE). The destruction of the Temple created a crisis within Judaism which was addressed in a number of apocalyptic texts, the most important of which was the Fourth Book of Ezra. The classic Christian apocalypse, the Revelation of John, which forms part of the New Testament, also belongs to this period.

A reaction against apocalyptic speculation seems to have set in within Judaism after the disastrous revolts of 66-74 and 132-135, in which Messianic speculation played a part. The leader of the Second Revolt, Bar Kokhba, was hailed as Messiah by some people. The Rabbinic writings are noticeably cool on the subject of Messianism, though the idea by no means disappeared. It was deeply enshrined in the Shemoneh 'Esreh which was obligatorily prayed by Jews twice a day. In the early seventh century, however, there was again a marked increase of interest. The reason for this was the Persian invasions of Syria-Palestine and the rise of Islam. The old political order of the Middle East was crumbling, and people began to look to apocalyptic speculation for guidance on what was happening. Major apocalypses which belong to this period are the Book of Zerubbabel and the Prayer of Rabbi Shim'on ben Yohai.

The Signs of the Day of Judgment

There is no standard scenario of the end of history in early Jew-

ish apocalyptic, but certain motifs occur again and again in a variety of forms. These can be organized into the following synthetic picture.

The 'Birth Pangs' of the Messiah

The end of history and the arrival of the Messianic age will be anticipated by a period of unusual distress, affliction and hardship. There will be many tribulations: the natural, the moral and the political order will be thrown into confusion and chaos. Children will not respect their parents, while famine and poverty will increase. Everything in nature will fall into tumult and disorder: the sun will shine by night, the moon by day; the rains will not come; springs will cease to flow; blood will drip from wood; voices will ring out of stones and in sweet water salt will be found. In addition the Torah will be forgotten, people will fight against each other and nation will rise against nation.

These Messianic woes were known in Rabbinic tradition as the 'birth-pangs of the Messiah'. The implication of this term is that Israel, like a mother, is to bring forth the Messiah in the pains of childbirth. This period of suffering and hardship, in which Israel is disciplined, tested and refined, is necessary for redemption. Only when the cup of evil is filled to the brim will the Messiah come to bring salvation. A classic statement of the birth-pangs of the Messiah is found in Mishnah Sotah:

As signs of the nearness of the Messiah wantonness increases; ambition shoots up; the vine yields fruit yet wine is costly. Government turns to heresy and there is no rebuke. The synagogue is dedicated to lewdness. Galilee is destroyed; Gablan is laid waste. The inhabitants of a region pass from city to city without finding pity. The learning of the Sages becomes foolish; those who fear sin are despised; truth is banished. Youths humiliate the aged; the aged stand before children. The son demeans the father; the daughter rebels against the mother; the daughter-in-

law against the mother-in-law; the members of a man's household are his enemies. The face of this generation is that of a dog, so that the son is not ashamed before his father.

The Appearance of Elijah

Elijah was a prophet sent to the northern kingdom of Israel, who was taken up, according to tradition, alive into heaven and succeeded by Elisha: 'As they were walking along and talking together suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind.' The prophet Elijah was expected to return to prepare the way of the Messiah: 'See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers.'

The role of bringing peace and settling disputes is stressed in the Mishnah:

Rabbi Joshua said: I have received the tradition from Rabban Yohanah ben Zakkai, who heard it from his teacher, and his teacher from his teacher, as a tradition of Moses from Sinai, that Elijah will not come to declare families unclean or clean, or to exclude or to admit, but only to exclude those who have been brought in by force and to admit those who have been excluded by force. A family named Beth Zerepha was in the land beyond Jordan and was excluded by force by a certain Ben Zion. And yet another (family) was there (of unclean blood) which was brought in by Ben Zion by force. Elijah will come to declare such as these to be unclean or clean, to exclude or to admit. Rabbi Judah says: Only to admit but not to exclude. Rabbi Simeon says: His mission is merely to settle disputes. The Sages say: Neither to exclude nor to admit, but his coming is merely to establish peace in the world,

for it is written: 'I will send you Elijah the prophet who will turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to the fathers (Mal. 4:5).'

Occasionally the opinion is expressed that Elijah will anoint the Messiah, or that he will reawaken and resurrect the dead: 'The resurrection of the dead shall come through Elijah of blessed memory.' The awakening of the dead is an appropriate role for the prophet who brought back to life the son of the widow of Zarephath.

The Appearance of the Temporary Messiah, the Son of Joseph

The Dawudic Messiah (on whom see below) will be preceded by another figure, the Messiah son of Joseph. He will gather the children of Israel round him, march to Jerusalem, and there, after overcoming the hostile powers, re-establish Temple worship and set up his own dominion. He will, however, be slain in battle, fighting against Gog and Magog and the Antichrist. He figures prominently in the late apocalypse, *Sefer Zerubbabel*, where he is given the name of Nehemiah son of Hushiel. There we read that 'no one will be able to stand before him [Armilos, the Antichrist, on whom see below]. He will slay by the sword anyone who does not believe in him, and he will slay many of them. He will attack the men of the holy ones of the Most High with the help of ten kings, in might and great strength. He will make war on the holy ones and destroy them. He will kill the Messiah son of Joseph, Nehemiah son of Hushiel, and sixteen righteous men with him. Then they will exile Israel to the wilderness in three groups.' This doctrine of the slain Messiah is not found in Second Temple Jewish apocalyptic. The earliest mention of it appears to be in the Babylonian Talmud: 'But when he [Messiah ben David] sees that Messiah ben Joseph is slain, he will say to him, "Lord of the Universe, I ask of thee only the gift of life."' It is possible that the idea originated after the death of Bar Kokhba,

who appears to have had messianic pretensions, but who was killed by the Romans at Bethar in 135 CE.

The Appearance of the Messiah Son of David

After the fall of the Messiah ben Joseph the Messiah ben David will appear, to avenge his death, to achieve the final redemption and to spread peace throughout the world. He will rule over Israel for ever in fulfilment of the promises to Dawud: 'He gives his king great victories; he shows unfailing kindness to his anointed, to David and his descendants for ever.'

According to the dominant view, the Messiah is a fully human individual descended from the House of Dawud. He is a righteous king, holy and free from sin, whom God will appoint over the house of Israel to discipline it. This view, particularly prominent in the Psalms attributed to Sulayman, is also found in the *Shemoneh 'Esreh*: 'To Jerusalem, your city, return in mercy, and dwell in it, as you have promised. Rebuild it soon in our days as an everlasting structure, and swiftly establish in it the throne of David. Blessed are you, O Lord, who rebuilds Jerusalem. Cause the scion of David your servant to spring up swiftly, and let his horn be exalted through your saving power, for we wait for your salvation all day long. Blessed are you, O Lord, who makes the horn of salvation to flourish.'

According to an alternative view, the Messiah is a collective entity, viz., 'the House of David'. Thus Jeremiah prophesied: 'I will make the descendants of David my servant and the Levites who minister before me as countless as the stars of the sky and as measureless as the sand on the seashore.' This has been taken by some to suggest the idea of a collective Messiah. Such a view appears to be found in the Book of Daniel: 'Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.'

According to a third view, the Messiah is a supra-mundane figure who preexisted in heaven before his revelation on earth. The more extraordinary the role assigned to the Messiah in the scenario at the end of history, the more his personal qualities tend to outstrip those of ordinary mortals. This view was, of course, to prevail in Christianity, which divinized 'Isa, but there are clear tendencies in this direction in pre-Christian Jewish apocalyptic. Thus 1 Enoch implies that the Messiah preexists in heaven. Allah created him before the creation of the world: 'And in those days my eyes saw the Elect One of righteousness and of faith ... and I saw his dwelling place underneath the wings of the Lord of the spirits.' In the Parables of Enoch he is referred to as the heavenly 'Son of Man', a designation which results directly from applying the language of Daniel 7:13 to a heavenly messianic figure. In 4 Ezra we read: 'This is the Messiah whom the Most High has kept till the end of days'; and again, 'This is the Messiah whom the Most High has been keeping for many ages.' This view can easily be reconciled with Micah 5:1, which states, that the origins of the Messiah are from ages past, from the beginning of days. Even Rabbinic tradition acknowledges that at least the name of the Messiah preexisted his advent on earth.

A variant on this view is the idea that the Messiah already exists on earth, but that he is in hiding, waiting the right moment to reveal himself. According to one strand of tradition he was born on the day that the Temple was destroyed, but is living now incognito in Rome, or in some other place. In *Sefer Zerubbabel*, Zerubbabel is shown 'the Lord's anointed, who is hidden in this place [Rome] until the end of time. This is the Messiah son of David, and his name is Menahem son of Amiel. He was born in the time of David, king of Israel, and a wind lifted him up and hid him in this place until the end of time.'

A number of opinions are expressed as to the place where the Messiah is to be born. According to the dream and vision of 1

Enoch, it is Jerusalem: 'I noticed that the House [Jerusalem] was large, wide and exceedingly full. Then I saw that a snow-white cow [the Messiah] was born with huge horns. All the beasts of the field and all the birds of the sky feared him and made petition to him all the time.' The common view, however, was that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem, the city of Dawud: 'But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, which art little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall one come forth unto me one that is to be ruler in Israel.'

The Last Assault of the Enemies of Israel

When the Messiah ben David appears the evil powers will gather to attack him: 'An innumerable multitude shall be gathered together, as you saw, desiring to come and to conquer him.' 'The kings of the people will launch an attack against this land, bringing doom on themselves, for they will want to destroy the Temple of the great God.' Prominent among these enemy forces will be the generals Gog and Magog. These names are derived from Ezekiel 38 and 39, where Gog appears as the leader of the eschatological enemies of Israel, and Magog is the name of the land from which he comes. In later tradition, however, Magog was interpreted as the name of a second general who together with Gog leads the forces of evil. Some traditions also interpret Gog and Magog as the names of peoples and see them as representative of the destroying pagan hordes which would march against Jerusalem. [It is one of the supreme ironies of history that the followers of the last Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, have always traditionally identified Yajuj and Majuj as tribes living on the shores of the Caspian Sea known as the Khazar. The Caspian Sea was known to the Arabs as 'The Sea of the Khazar'. This tribe later accepted Judaism and are the dominant element of world Judaism today, the Ashkenazi Jews. See Arthur Koestler's 'The Thirteenth Tribe' a popular summary of academic work most of which was carried out in the University of Tel Aviv.

Thus, the arch eschatological enemy of the Biblical Children of Israel turns out to be a Turkic tribe who accept Judaism and found a land in Palestine which they call Israel, having themselves no right to a pretension to being either of Judah or Israel. – Ed.]

According to a well established view the eschatological enemies of Israel would be led by an anti-Messiah, an anti-Christ, the precise relationship of whom to Gog and Magog varies from text to text. This principal adversary of the Messiah ben David is known in Rabbinic tradition as Armilos, a name derived from Romulus, one of the mythical founders of the city of Rome. The hostile forces will be defeated, according to 1 Enoch, by the direct intervention of God Himself:

I kept seeing till the Lord of the sheep came unto them and took in His hand the rod of His wrath and smote the earth, and all the beasts and all the birds of heaven fell down from the midst of those sheep and were swallowed up in the earth, and it was covered upon them. Then I saw that a great sword was given to the sheep, and the sheep proceeded against all the beasts of the field in order to kill them.

An alternative view, however, depicts the Messiah himself as destroying the evil powers and putting an end to all wars upon the earth: 'This is the Messiah whom the Most High has kept until the end of days, who will arise from the posterity of David ... and he will denounce them for their wickedness, and will cast up before them their contemptuous dealings. For first he will set them living before his judgment seat, and when he has reproved them, then he will destroy them.' Here the destruction of the enemy is a judicial process. In most scenarios, however, it is a result of battle. The Book of Zerubbabel, in typical fashion, combines a number of diverse traditions, not very coherently, together:

In Tammuz, the fourth month, the Lord God of Israel will descend upon the Mount of Olives, which will split at His rebuke. The Lord will blow the great shofar. All the strange gods of every temple of images and wall and cliff will fall to the ground. The Lord will strike all their plunderers. He will fight against those nations. Like a warrior he will stir up his zeal. Menahem son of Amiel [the Messiah ben David], the anointed of the Lord, will come, and he will breathe on Armilos with his nostrils and slay him. The Lord will lay each man's sword upon his neighbour's neck, and there they will fall dead. Then the holy nation will go out to see the salvation of the Lord. With their own eyes all the children of Israel will see the Lord, like a man of war with a helmet of salvation upon his head, dressed in armour. He will do battle against Gog and Magog and against the forces of Armilos, and they will all fall dead in the valley of Arbael. Then all Israel will go forth and plunder their plunderers and despoil their despoilers for seven months. But a fraction [of the enemy] will escape and gather at Zela ha-Eleph, five hundred men, and a hundred thousand dressed in armour. [Against them] will be five hundred men of Israel, with Nehemiah, Elijah, and you, Zerubbabel, at their head. And [you] will kill all of them, for there one man will pursue a thousand.

In Christian tradition, the last great battle will take place at Armageddon. This has commonly been explained as a Greek corruption of the Hebrew *Har Megiddo*, the hill of Megiddo. If this explanation is correct, then the climactic events of the eschatological war would be located near the ancient city of Megiddo in the Plain of Jezreel in Galilee. However, most traditions imply that the last great battle will be somewhere in the vicinity of Jerusalem.

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I kept seeing till the Lord of the sheep came unto them and took in His hand the rod of His wrath and smote the earth, and all the beasts and all the birds of heaven fell down from the midst of those sheep and were swallowed up in the earth, and it was covered upon them. Then I saw that a great sword was given to the sheep, and the sheep proceeded against all the beasts of the field in order to kill them.

An alternative view, however, depicts the Messiah himself as destroying the evil powers and putting an end to all wars upon the earth: 'This is the Messiah whom the Most High has kept until the end of days, who will arise from the posterity of David ... and he will denounce them for their wickedness, and will cast up before them their contemptuous dealings. For first he will set them living before his judgment seat, and when he has reproved them, then he will destroy them.' Here the destruction of the enemy is a judicial process. In most scenarios, however, it is a result of battle. The Book of Zerubbabel, in typical fashion, combines a number of diverse traditions, not very coherently, together:

In Tammuz, the fourth month, the Lord God of Israel will descend upon the Mount of Olives, which will split at His rebuke. The Lord will blow the great shofar. All the strange gods of every temple of images and wall and cliff will fall to the ground. The Lord will strike all their plunderers. He will fight against those nations. Like a warrior he will stir up his zeal. Menahem son of Amiel [the Messiah ben David], the anointed of the Lord, will come, and he will breathe on Armilos with his nostrils and slay him. The Lord will lay each man's sword upon his neighbour's neck, and there they will fall dead. Then the holy nation will go out to see the salvation of the Lord. With their own eyes all the children of Israel will see the Lord, like a man of war with a helmet of salvation upon his head, dressed in armour. He will do battle against Gog and Magog and against the forces of Armilos, and they will all fall dead in the valley of Arbael. Then all Israel will go forth and plunder their plunderers and despoil their despoilers for seven months. But a fraction [of the enemy] will escape and gather at Zela ha-Eleph, five hundred men, and a hundred thousand dressed in armour. [Against them] will be five hundred men of Israel, with Nehemiah, Elijah, and you, Zerubbabel, at their head. And [you] will kill all of them, for there one man will pursue a thousand.

In Christian tradition, the last great battle will take place at Armageddon. This has commonly been explained as a Greek corruption of the Hebrew *Har Megiddo*, the hill of Megiddo. If this explanation is correct, then the climactic events of the eschatological war would be located near the ancient city of Megiddo in the Plain of Jezreel in Galilee. However, most traditions imply that the last great battle will be somewhere in the vicinity of Jerusalem.

The Messianic Kingdom

The final defeat of the enemies of Israel will inaugurate the Messianic Kingdom. According to Christian tradition, as represented by the Book of Revelation, this Messianic kingdom is to last a thousand years. This figure is not without parallel in Jewish sources, but in general the texts are not so precise, but they all imply that the Messiah will reign for a very long time, if not forever. The Talmud suggests that the Messianic Kingdom will last four hundred years. There are various elements in the description of the Messianic Kingdom, the most important of which are as follows:

The Renewal of Jerusalem

The renewal of the Land will begin with Jerusalem. This renewal will mean the purging of evil people from the holy city. Thus, according to Ps. Sol. 17:1-46, one of the blessings of the messianic age will be the expulsion of the Gentiles from the Land of Israel, which will henceforth be occupied only by righteous people.

Jerusalem will be enlarged and rebuilt by human hands: 'I will return to Jerusalem with mercy, and there My house will be rebuilt. And the measuring line will be stretched out over Jerusalem.' The new-built Jerusalem will be very beautiful, in keeping with the prophecy of Isaiah, 'I will build you with stones of turquoise, your foundations with sapphires. I will make your battlements of rubies, your gates of sparkling jewels, and your walls of precious stones.' This new Jerusalem will replace the old one, but Jerusalem will remain the place of salvation, built for eternity, the mid-point of the earth, enlarged so that it can accommodate the multitudes who will in the end come to it.

There was much speculation on this new Jerusalem. According to one tradition it is already in existence, kept with God in heaven, ready to descend to earth at the end of time. Ezekiel saw this new Jerusalem in vision and gave a description of its gates and other features, especially the Temple in its midst. Isaiah too was

shown a general view of the new Jerusalem's glories, while Zakariyya saw a vision of two angels measuring the city. Ezra is also said to have seen the new Jerusalem in vision. In the Dead Sea Scrolls there are the remains of both an Aramaic and a Hebrew work giving a detailed description of the new Jerusalem in the eschatological age. And the new Jerusalem is alluded to in Talmudic literature when God says, 'I will not enter the heavenly Jerusalem until I have entered the earthly Jerusalem.' An unusually vivid image of this new Jerusalem is presented by the Seer John in the Book of Revelation:

And he [the angel] carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and shewed me the holy city Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: her light was unto a stone most precious, as it were a jasper stone, clear as crystal: having a wall great and high; having twelve gates, and at the twelve gates twelve angels; and the names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: on the east were three gates; and on the north three gates; and on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And he that spake with me had for a measure a golden reed to measure the city and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length thereof is as great as the breadth and the height thereof are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, a hundred and forty four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. And the building of the wall thereof was jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto pure glass. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with precious stones ... And the twelve gates were twelve pearls ... and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Al-

mighty, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof.

According to another tradition the heavenly Jerusalem will not descend to earth to replace the earthly city. The heavenly Jerusalem will remain transcendent, but there will be the closest of relationships between it and its earthly counterpart. This view seems to be implied by B.T. Ta'anith 5a, to which we referred above. The full text reads:

Rabbi Nahman asked Rabbi Isaac: How do you explain the verse (Hos. 11:9), 'The Holy One in the midst of thee, and I will not come into the city': because the Holy One is in the midst of thee, I shall not come into the city? Thus said Rabbi Yohanan: The Holy One, blessed be He, meant to say, I will not enter into the heavenly Jerusalem until I can enter into the earthly Jerusalem. Is there then a heavenly Jerusalem? Yes, for it is written (Ps 122:3), 'Jerusalem, thou art built as a city that is compact together.'

In the vision of Zakariyya the new Jerusalem, whose walls will be made of fire, will be enlarged to accommodate all the people who will flood into it: its boundary will, in fact, be coextensive with the Land of Israel and will run from the great wilderness to the Mediterranean Sea and to the River Euphrates.

Whether the earthly Jerusalem is renewed or the heavenly Jerusalem descends to replace it, all scenarios of the end agree that a central feature of the Messianic kingdom will be that there will be a new Jerusalem.

The Rebuilding of the Temple

As we noted in Chapter Three, the Temple was a focal point of Jewish worship. Sulayman built it on the spot where Ibrahim had bound Ishaq, and within it was the foundation stone of the world. The Temple originally contained the Ark, the symbol of the covenant between God and Israel. It was the place where the glory of God was manifested, which symbolized God's presence

with His people. It was the place where the great daily and festival sacrifices were offered to atone for the sins of Israel. It is not surprising, therefore, that the restoration of Israel should involve also the restoration of the Temple. That the Temple would be restored was a natural corollary of the restoration of Jerusalem, though the idea was by no means universal. The early Christian writer John saw a new Jerusalem without a Temple, 'for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof' (see above).

The link between the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the rebuilding of the Temple is clear in the prophecies of Zakariyya:

Then the angel who was speaking with me said: 'Proclaim this word: This is what the Lord Almighty says: I am very jealous for Jerusalem and Zion, but I am very angry with the nations that feel secure. I was only a little angry, but they added to the calamity. Therefore, this is what the Lord says: I will return to Jerusalem with mercy, and there My house will be rebuilt. And the measuring line will be stretched out over Jerusalem, declares the Lord Almighty.'

Similarly, Ezekiel in his vision of the rebuilt Temple sees the glory of the Lord entering the Temple through the gate facing east. 'Then,' he says, 'the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court, and the glory of the Lord filled the Temple.' The hope of rebuilding the Temple (Figure 5.2) also appears in later Jewish tradition. One of the benedictions of the Shemoneh 'Esreh prays:

O Lord our God, receive with pleasure Your people Israel and their prayers. Restore the service of the sanctuary of Your House. Accept with love and approval the fire-offerings of Israel and their prayers, and may the service of Your people Israel be ever pleasing to You. May our eyes witness Your return in mercy to Zion. Blessed are You, O Lord, who brings back His Shekhinah to Zion.

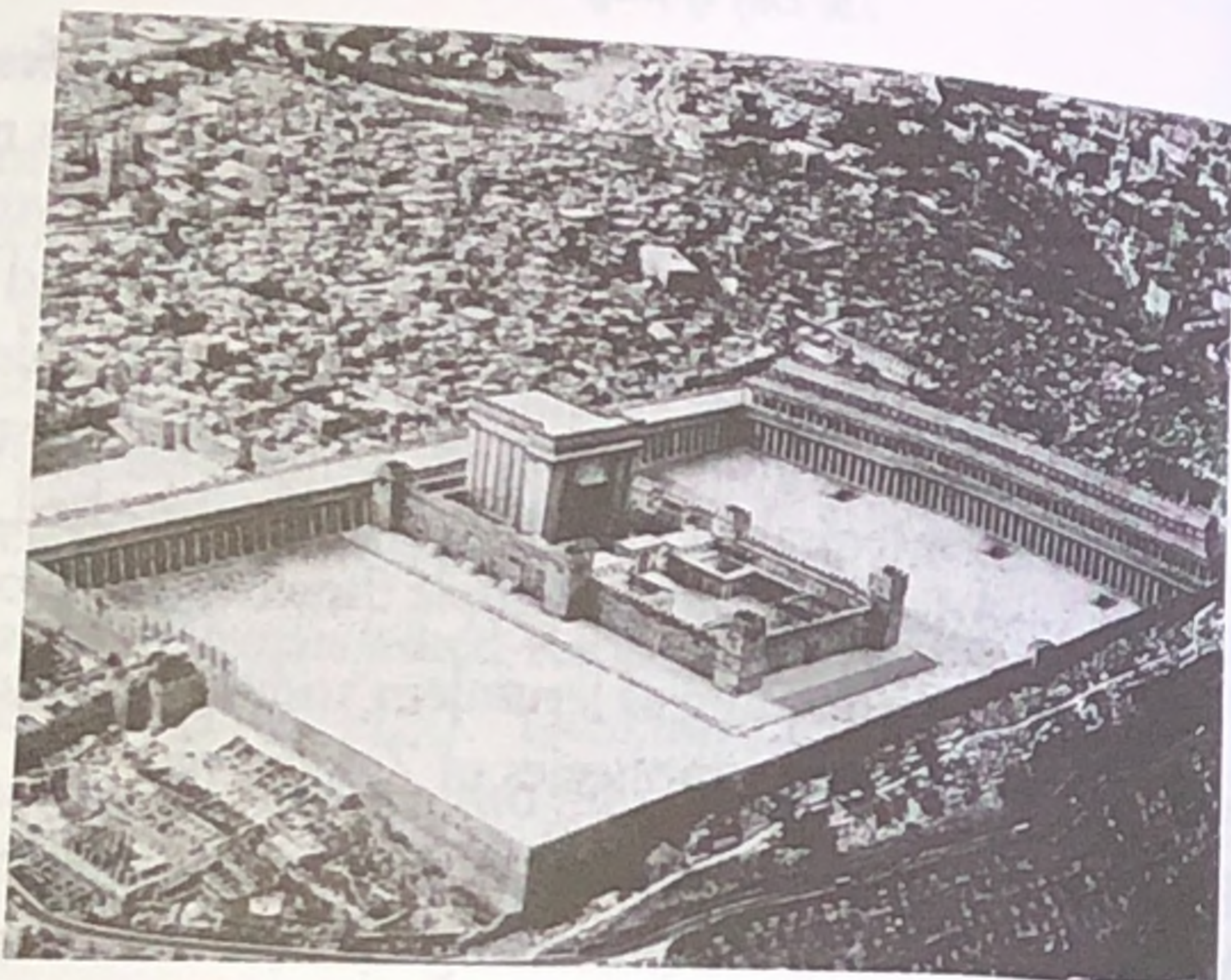


Figure 5.2

There were two views concerning the future Temple, which parallel the two views of the future Jerusalem. The first is that the Temple is one of the things which Allah created at the beginning of the world and that it already exists in heaven and will descend to earth at the end of time. This view is reflected in B.T. Hagigah 12b, where in a comment on 1 Kings 8:13, 'I have surely built thee a house to dwell in, a settled place for thee to abide in for ever', the opinion of Resh Lakish is reported that the heavenly Temple is situated in Zebul (the fourth heaven) and that the Temple and its altar are already built, waiting the time when they can be established on earth. The second view is that the earthly Temple will be rebuilt on the place where Sulayman built his Temple, and that this earthly Temple would correspond to the heavenly Temple. According to the Book of Zerubbabel the Temple would be built on five mountain tops 'that the Lord chose to bear His sanctuary, Lebanon, Mount Moriah, Tabor, Carmel and Hermon.' This idea is probably based on an over-literal interpretation of Isaiah 2:2, 'And it will come to pass at the end of days that the house of the Lord will be established on the mountain tops.' A parallel passage in the Midrash to the

The Day of Judgement and Jerusalem in Judaism

Psalms (Psalm 68:9) lists only four mountains: Tabor, Carmel, Sinai and Zion (= Moriah). Mount Sinai does not appear in the Book of Zerubbabel, which adds, however, Lebanon and Hermon.

Whether the heavenly Jerusalem descends or the earthly Temple is rebuilt, the restoration of the Temple is one of the major signs in Jewish eschatology of the last days, and one of the principal obligations of the Jews is to rebuild the Temple once they are re-established in the Holy Land. Thus Rabbi Akiva composed the following benediction to be recited on the first night of Passover:

O Lord our God and God of our fathers, bring us in peace to the other set feasts and festivals which are coming to meet us, while we rejoice in building up the city and are joyful in Thy worship, and may we eat thereof the sacrifices and the Passover-offerings whose blood has reached with acceptance the walls of Thy Altar, and let us praise Thee for our redemption, and for the ransoming of our souls.

Haggai and Zakariyya seem to assign a key role to the Messiah in the rebuilding of the Temple. The Qumran scrolls contain a detailed blueprint of the new Temple and set out the law of how the priests should conduct worship in it.

The Ingathering of the Exiles

The establishment of the Messianic Kingdom will result in the ingathering of the Jewish exiles. The Diaspora will be negated and reversed. In the tenth benediction of the Shemoneh 'Esreh, the Jew prays daily: 'Sound the great horn of our freedom. Raise the banner to rally our exiles, and gather us in from the four corners of the earth. Blessed are You, O Lord, who gathers the dispersed of His people Israel.' The antiquity of this prayer is shown by a passage from Ben Sira in which he petitions, 'Gather all the tribes of Jacob together, that they may receive their inheritance as in the days of old.' The return of the exiles is often

depicted in miraculous terms: the mountains are levelled before them; springs of water appear to sustain them; all nature and even the Gentiles strive in a concerted effort to assist them on their way. Psalms of Solomon 11 is typical:

Stand upon the height, O Jerusalem, and behold thy children,

From the east and the west, gathered together by the Lord.

From the north they come in the joy of their God;

From the islands far away has God gathered them.

High mountains has He made low to make a plain for them:

The hills fled at their approach.

The woods gave them shade as they passed by:

God caused to spring up for them every kind of sweet-scented tree;

That Israel might pass by at the visitation of the glory of their God.

The fate of the Ten Tribes exiled by the Assyrians in 722 BCE provoked a great deal of speculation. There was a general feeling that they had somehow vanished and been lost, but most expected them to return. According to the author of 4 Ezra they had gone to a very distant land, which he calls Azareth, beyond the Euphrates, there to observe in peace their laws. When they come back God will stop up the channels of the river so that they may be able to pass over on dry land, just as he stopped the Jordan to enable the Israelites to enter for the first time the Promised Land. The Mishnah, however, records the pessimism of Rabbi Akiba about the fate of the Ten Tribes. Rabbi Eliezer expresses a more hopeful view: 'The ten tribes shall never return, for it is written of them, 'And I will cast them into another land like this day' (Deut. 29:27). Just as this day goes and returns not, so shall

they also go and not return. Thus Rabbi Akiva. But Rabbi Eliezer says: 'As the day darkens and becomes light once more, so for the ten tribes for whom it became dark shall there be light once more.'

The First Resurrection

Jews who have already died will be raised to life again to enjoy the Messianic kingdom. This view is as old as the Book of Daniel, the Psalms of Solomon and 1 Enoch. The second benediction of the Shemoneh 'Esreh praises God as the one 'who revives the dead'. In the earlier sources there is considerable confusion between this first limited resurrection of Jews to enjoy the Messianic blessings and the second general resurrection of all mankind for judgment (on which see below). In later Jewish eschatology, however, the two resurrections become more clearly distinguished. The distinction is clearly made in the Book of Revelation: 'And I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years. And the rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished. This is the first resurrection.' According to later Jewish tradition this first resurrection would begin with the Jews buried on the Mount of Olives next to Jerusalem. For this reason burial on the Mount of Olives was seen by Jews as especially propitious. But Jews buried elsewhere would also participate. Fanciful notions were expressed as to how those buried outside the Land would roll through subterranean tunnels to emerge to life in Jerusalem. This view is classically expressed in the Targum of the Song of Songs:

When the dead revive, the Mount of Olives shall be split apart, and all the dead of Israel shall come out from under it. And even the righteous ones who have died in exile

shall come by the way of the caves from under the earth, and come out from under the Mount of Olives.

Similarly Genesis Rabba claims that God will make cavities like channels in the earth, and the dead will roll along them until they reach the Land of Israel, where God will breathe into them a spirit of life and they will rise. And Pesiqta Rabbati states; 'As for those swallowed up in exile, God will make passageway after passageway for them, and they will find their way under ground through them until they arrive under the Mount of Olives ... and after it is cleaved for the exiles, they will come out from under it'.

The Renewal of the World

The establishment of the Messianic kingdom in the Land of Israel will result in the transformation of the whole world. This transformation is described mainly in language drawn from the prophetic books of the Hebrew Bible. There will be a period of universal peace: wars will cease; strife, discord and quarrelling will come to an end. There will be an abundance of wealth and good things; women will bear children without pain; wild animals will cease their predations, and the wicked shall be removed. The span of human life will increase, again approaching a thousand, yet people will not suffer a decrease of powers in old age but will remain perpetually youthful.

Jewish eschatology divided history into two ages, 'this age' (*ha-'olam ha-zeh*) and 'the age to come' (*ha-'olam ha-ba*). There is considerable disagreement, however, as to when 'the age to come' would begin. In the age to come the world would be transformed in fulfilment of the prophecies of Isaiah, but does the new age begin with the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom, or after the last judgment? 1 Enoch takes the former view: 'And on that day I will cause my Elect [the Messiah] to dwell among them, and will transform heaven and make it to be a blessing and a light for ever. And I will transform the earth and make it into a blessing, and will cause my Elect to dwell on it.' The latter view

is advocated by 4 Ezra: 'And after these years my son the Messiah shall die, and all who draw human breath. And the world shall be turned back to primaeval silence for seven days, as it was at the first beginnings; so no one shall be left. After seven days the world, which is not yet awake, shall be aroused, and that which is corruptible shall perish.'

Certain Rabbinic traditions also distinguish between 'the age to come' and 'the days of the Messiah', seeing the latter as part of this present age. 2 Baruch takes a mediating position, which regards the Messianic age as a transitional period between 'this age' and 'the age to come': 'For that age [the Messianic age] is the end of that which is corruptible and the beginning of that which is incorruptible ... Therefore it is far from evil and near to those things which do not die.'

The Last Judgment

Whether it lasts four hundred or a thousand years, there is general agreement that the Messianic Kingdom is of limited duration and will finally come to an end. It will be followed by a period which is dominated by the Day of Judgment, at which all men will be judged and rewarded or punished for their deeds.

The General Resurrection of the Dead

In order that all humanity can be judged, there will be a general resurrection of the dead. This resurrection is to be distinguished from the first resurrection, at which only the pious Jews of former ages will be resurrected to participate in the blessings of the Messianic Kingdom. There was considerable speculation as to what happens to people between their death and the general resurrection. The older view saw them as 'sleeping' in the earth, unconscious of either good or evil. However, those texts which held that man is composed of body and soul usually taught that the body sleeps in the earth, but the soul is held fully conscious in some spiritual realm till it is reunited with the reconstituted physi-

cal body. They may be held undifferentiated - the wicked and the righteous together - in the underworld, but some found this idea unacceptable and postulated a preliminary judgment of the soul at death (the judgment of the grave), on the basis of which the soul was assigned in the interim to a place of bliss or of torment.

The Day of Judgment

The Day of Judgment is described vividly in a number of texts. God takes his seat upon His Throne, the books in which the deeds of humanity have been faithfully recorded are opened and each person is judged: 'And I beheld till thrones were placed, and One that was Ancient of Days did sit: His raiment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like pure wool: His throne was fiery flames and the wheels thereof burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousands thousands ministered unto him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.'

Paradise and Gehenna

The wicked will be punished by being cast into the fires of Gehenna, the righteous rewarded by being brought into Paradise:

Then the pit of torment shall appear, and opposite it shall be the place of rest; and the furnace of Hell shall be disclosed, and opposite it shall be the Paradise of delight. Then the Most High will say to the nations that have been raised from the dead, 'Look now, and understand whom you have denied, whom you have not served, whose commandments you have despised! Look on this side and on that; here are delight and rest, and there are fire and torments!' Thus He will speak to them on the day of judgment - a day that has no sun or moon or stars, or cloud or thunder or lightning or wind or water or air, or darkness or evening or morning or summer or spring or heat or winter or frost or cold or

hail or rain or dew, or moon or night, or dawn or shining or brightness or light, but only the splendour of the glory of the Most High, by which all shall see what has been determined for them.'

It is generally assumed that the bliss of the righteous in Paradise will be eternal. There is some difference of opinion as to whether the torments of the damned will also be eternal. The dominant view appears to have been that they will be, but there was also a minority view that they would be of limited duration and that after a period the wicked would be annihilated.

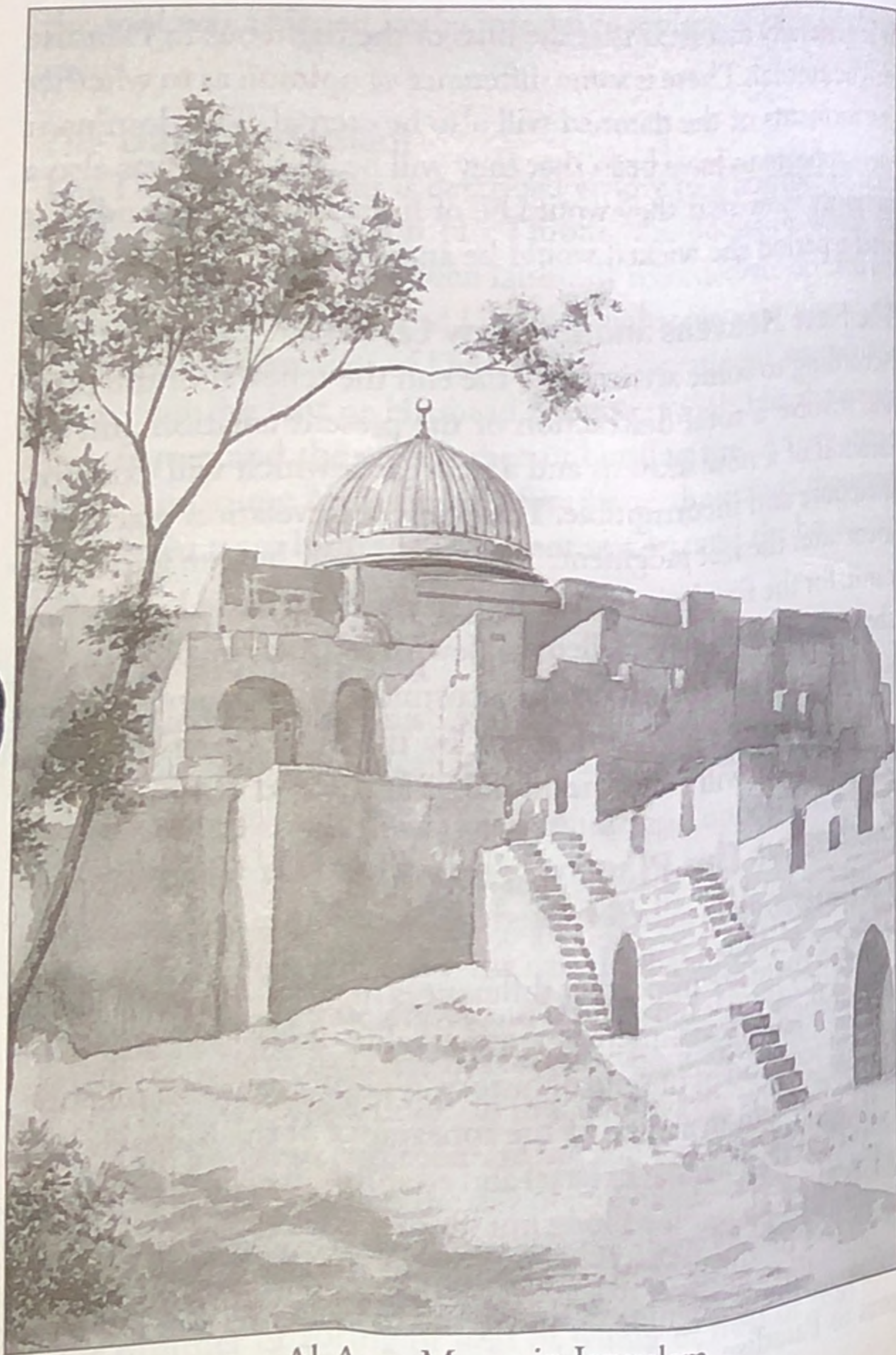
The New Heavens and the New Earth

According to some scenarios of the end the renewal of the earth will involve a total destruction of the present creation and the creation of a new heavens and a new earth which will exist forever, pure and incorruptible. The Book of Revelation places this event after the last judgment: 'And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more.' In Hellenistic Jewish sources the old heavens and earth will be consumed in a cosmic conflagration - a view which may have been influenced by the Stoic doctrine of the great fire that will consume all things at the end of history.

Summary: The Place of Jerusalem in Jewish Eschatology

Though there are important differences in detail between Jewish eschatological texts, there is a remarkable agreement about the general scenario of the end of history. A period of Messianic woes will be brought to an end by the appearance of the Messiah, who will defeat the enemies of Israel and establish the Messianic Kingdom. This will last for a long but limited period and be brought to an end by the general resurrection of the dead, the last judgment and the consigning of the wicked to Gehenna and the righteous to Paradise. In this elaborate picture of the end of history

Jerusalem plays a central role. Many of the key events of the end-time will take place at Jerusalem, which, with its renewed Temple, will become again the centre of the world.



Al-Aqsa Mosue in Jerusalem

Chapter 6

Al-Quds and the Day of Judgement in Islam

The Development of Eschatology of Islam

Muslims believe that life and history is moving purposefully towards a climax which it calls 'the Hour' (*as-Sa'ah*) or 'the Day of Judgment' (*Yawm ad-Din*). Belief in the coming Day of Judgment is a fundamental article of the Islamic creed. Much of the basic schema of Islamic eschatology is already implicit in the Qur'an, but the references and allusions there are scattered and un-systematic. They proved, however, to be highly suggestive to some later interpreters, who worked them up into ever more detailed and elaborate scenarios of the end of time. The systematising of the tradition was partly the work of the dogmatic theologians, partly the work of traditionists such as Muslim and al-Bukhari, and partly the work of homilists who, like preachers in every generation, found the vivid description of the pains of hell a useful means of stimulating the piety of their audiences. A vast literature was created dealing with 'trials and signs of the Hour' (*al-fitan wa-ashrat/ayat as-Sa'ah*), in which the signs were listed, described and categorised as 'major' or 'minor'.

Three broad phases of the end of history can be distinguished:

The period of the signs which foretell the Hour;

The Day of Judgment itself, beginning with the resurrection of the dead and ending with the passing of sentence;

The consigning of the righteous to the Garden and the wicked to the Fire.

The Islamic Scenario of the End of History

The Signs of the Day of Judgment

Social Turmoil and Natural Disasters

The signs of the Day of Judgment in Islamic sources generally correspond to the Messianic Woes or Birth-pangs of the Messiah in Jewish eschatology. There is the same sense that the end of history will be preceded by a breakdown in the social order of human society, and that disasters and prodigies will occur in nature. Among the minor signs of the Day of Judgment are the following: growth of ignorance among the people; the prevalence of adultery; the common drinking of wine; a decrease in the number of men and an increase in the number of women, until there will be fifty women to be looked after by each man; widespread killing and murder; wicked men wielding political power; new diseases befalling people which their forefathers never suffered; use of false weights and measures; famine; husbands and wives dishonouring the husband's mother and treating his friends kindly whilst shunning his father; the Bedouin constructing lofty buildings; and liars appearing claiming that they are prophets sent by Allah. It was also reported that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, had said that a fight between Muslims and Jews will take place in the Holy Land:

Abu Hurairah said, "The Prophet said, 'The Hour will not come until the Muslims fight the Jews and kill them. When a Jew hides behind a rock or a tree, it will say, "O Muslim, O slave of Allah! There is a Jew behind me, come and kill him!" All the trees will do this except the box-thron (*al-gharqad*), because it is the tree of the Jews'" (Ahmad, *Musnad*, Volume 2, page 417).

Abu Hurairah said, "The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said, 'The Last Hour will not come until the Muslims fight against the Jews, and the Muslims kill them until

the Jews will hide themselves behind a stone or a tree and the stone or tree will say: "Muslim, or slave of Allah, there is a Jew behind me; come and kill him"; but the *gharqad* tree will not say that, for it is the tree of the Jews'." (Sahih Muslim, Book 40, Number 6985)

Most of the natural disasters and prodigies belong to the category of major signs, though not all major signs are of this type, since they include such events as the appearance of the Dajjal (literally "Liar". Popularly identified with the Antichrist of Christian eschatology), the appearance of the Mahdi although this is not unanimously agreed upon, the descent of 'Isa the son of Maryam, and the appearance of Yajuj and Majuj (on all of which see further below). The natural disasters include the appearance of 'the Smoke'. This sign is referred to in the Qur'an:

Then watch for the Day that the sky will produce clear smoke. (Surat ad-Dukhan: 9)

The meaning of this passage is disputed by the commentators. Some take it as referring to a famine in Makkah in the eighth year of the mission of the Messenger of Allah which was so severe that the eyes of the people misted over. Others, however, regard it as one of the signs of the Day of Judgment: smoke will fill the whole world from east to west, and last for forty days.

Another major sign involving nature will be the rising of the sun in the west. According to tradition this sign is alluded to in the Qur'anic ayah:

What are they waiting for but for the angels to come to them or for your Lord to come, or for certain of the signs of your Lord to come? On the day that certain of the signs of your Lord do come, no belief a self professes, which did not believe before or earn good in its belief, will be of use to it. Say: 'Wait. We too are waiting.' (Surat al-An'am: 159)

A hadith explains that when the sun rises from the west, the

people will see it and become believers, but by then it will be too late. It will be of no avail to any soul to believe in Allah's signs, for the door of repentance will be closed. This sign will come suddenly, will last for one day, and then the sun will rise as normal.

It was also predicted that there would be earthquakes or landslides, one in the east, one in the west and one in Arabia. The landslide in Arabia may be the one mentioned in the hadith which the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, says:

'An army will come to destroy the Ka'bah and when they are in a waterless desert of the land the earth will sink with all of them. 'A'ishah asked, 'How will all of them be swallowed up by the earth when some of them are conscripts and there are others who do not belong to them?' He replied, 'All of them will be swallowed up and they will be raised up according to their intentions.'

Towards the end of the period of the signs a fire will break out in the Yemen and drive the people to the land of final assembly, in which Bait al-Maqdis will be situated. Ka'b al-Ahbar said that Allah will command an angel to call from the rock of al-Quds, 'O rotten bones, come and gather for Judgment,' thereby indicating that al-Quds will be the Place of Gathering. Further evidence to this effect is found in the Prophet's answer to the enquiry of Maimunah bint Sa'd: 'O Prophet of Allah, tell us about Bait al-Maqdis,' to which he replied, 'It is the land of gathering and resurrection.' And referring to the Qur'anic ayah in which the exhortation is made:

Listen for the Day when the Caller will call out from a place quite near, (Surat Qaf: 41)

Ibn Kathir commented, "Quite near" means the Rock of Bait al-Maqdis.'

Other prodigies and disasters in nature are reckoned as belonging to the signs of the Hour, but their relationship to each other and to the 'political' signs (the appearance of the Dajjal, the descent of 'Isa, the coming of Yajuj and Majuj, and so forth) are explained differently in different sources.

The Appearance of ad-Dajjal

A major sign of the end will be the appearance of the Dajjal, or al-Masih ad-Dajjal ('the false or lying Messiah'), who, though not mentioned specifically in the Qur'an, plays an important role in Islamic eschatology. He is a man created by Allah to test the people, and he will lead many astray. He is referred to as the Great Dajjal because the trials and afflictions that he will bring upon the world will be so severe that they will exceed anything previously experienced by mankind. He will perform wonders and false miracles which will seduce many from the true faith. He will bring with him water and fire, but what people see as fire will be cold, sweet water, while what they see as water will be fire. He will command the sky and it will give rain, and the earth and it will produce crops, and all the animals will return with their udders full of milk and their flanks bulging. He will command the wasteland and tell it to bring forth its treasures, and its treasures will follow him like swarms of bees. Anyone who refuses to believe in him and rejects his call will be made destitute of all their property. He will summon a man in the pride of his youth, strike him with a sword, and cut him in two, after which he will call him and he will come forward laughing and with his face shining.

Because the trials and tribulations inflicted by the Dajjal will be very great and engulf all mankind – men and women, young and old – no part of the world will be safe from his domination except the holy cities of Makkah, Madinah and some say al-Quds also, which Allah will protect by angels with swords in their hands, who will keep him at bay.

All the prophets, the traditions say, from Nuh to Muhammad, peace be upon him and all the prophets, have warned their people about this trial. The Dajjal is normally described as being of monstrous appearance, with only one eye, over which there will be a rough covering, and the word *kafir* (one who covers over the truth) will be written on his forehead, but some claim, in keeping with his role of seducing people from the truth, that his appearance will be pleasing. Traditions differ as to where he will first appear. According to one tradition he will first manifest himself on the road between Syria and Iraq, but according to another his first appearance will be in Khurasan. Some traditions link him closely with the Jews, who will accept him as their promised Messiah, hence his name 'the False Messiah', and they will apply to him many of the Jewish prophecies about the Messiah.

Instructions are given to the faithful as to how to protect themselves from the power of the Dajjal. One must do three things:

(1) Seek refuge in Allah from the tribulation of the Dajjal by praying:

'O Allah, we seek refuge with You from the punishment of Hell, from the punishment of the grave, from the tribulations of life and death and from the tribulation of the Dajjal.'

(2) Live in one of the three holy cities (Makkah, Madinah or al-Quds) which Allah will guard with angels at their gates.

(3) Memorise the first ten ayat of Surat 18 (al-Kahf): 1-10.

The length of time that the Dajjal will wreak havoc on earth is denoted in the tradition by the number 'forty'. This has been variously interpreted as indicating either forty days, forty months or forty years. The Dajjal will be destroyed by 'Isa son of Maryam (see further below).

The Mahdi

Though the traditions regarding the appearance of al-Mahdi, the rightly-guided caliph, like the tradition regarding the Dajjal,

is not referred to in the Qur'an, it has come to form an important and widespread element of Islamic eschatology. The Prophet is reported to have said:

If there were only one day left for the world, that day would be lengthened until a man from among my descendants, or from among the people of my household, was sent. His name will be the same as my name and his father's name will be the same as my father's name. He will fill the earth with justice and fairness, just as it will have been filled with injustice and oppression.

According to this hadith the Mahdi will be descended from the family of the Prophet, specifically from the descendants of Hasan, the son of Fatimah, daughter of the Prophet Muhammad. Here we must differentiate between Shi'i and Sunni opinion. According to the opinion of the Twelve Imam Shi'ah, the Mahdi will appear from a tunnel in Samarra' into which he went when he was five years old, and his name will be Muhammad ibn al-Hasan ibn al-'Askari. Thus the Mahdi has already appeared, but is in hiding, waiting to manifest himself again at the end of history. According to the ahadith of the famous books of the Sunnah, however, the Mahdi's name will be Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah. The people will swear allegiance to him at the Ka'bah between ar-Rukn and al-Maqam. To proclaim his mission he will live in al-Quds, and in his time there will be peace and prosperity with abundant crops and wealth for all. It will be in the time of the Mahdi that the Dajjal will appear, and according to some he will be destroyed by the Mahdi. According to the majority he will be destroyed at the hands of 'Isa (see below).

[However, it must be mentioned that none of the famous statements of *Aqidah* of the Muslims include the Mahdi as one of the matters in which one has to believe. Furthermore, Malik in his famous compilation, the Muwatta, does not mention him at all, and neither do al-Bukhari and Muslim. Ibn Khaldun, the fa-

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mous Qadi, faqih, 'alim and historian, in his noted book the *Muqaddimah*, devotes a chapter to all of the ahadith which mention the Mahdi, each of which he examines in detail, and he found almost none of them to be authentic according to the stringent criteria of scholars of ahadith. – Ed.]

The Descent of 'Isa son of Maryam

There is only one possible allusion in the Qur'an to the appearance of 'Isa at the end of history. It is found in Surah 43 (az-Zukhruf): 61. The text, which is difficult and interpreted in various ways, occurs in a passage about Sayyiduna 'Isa. It is translated as follows:

And he is a Sign of the Hour: therefore have no doubt about him (or it), but follow Me: this is a straight way.

According to tradition he will descend from heaven to earth in Syria, near to Damascus, east of the white minaret at the time of the dawn prayer, and come to Bait al-Maqdis at the time of the morning prayer. Having prayed with the congregation he will kill all the swine in the city, and destroy the crosses.

The place of the killing of the Dajjal is mentioned in a hadith

He ['Isa] will come again and, when you see him, recognise him! His colouring is reddish white; he will be wearing two Egyptian garments; his head will appear to drip moisture even though water has not touched him; and near the town called Lud he will kill the Dajjal.

The town of Lud is probably the ancient Lydda, the modern day Lod near Tel Aviv. One tradition states that after 'Isa has killed the Dajjal, some of the People of the Book (*Ahl al-Kitab*) will believe in him, so that there will be one faith-community, the community of Islam. Then for forty years there will be peace and security for man and beast. But then 'Isa will die and be buried.

Another tradition states that, when 'Isa has killed the Dajjal,

Allah will command him to wipe away the traces of hardship from the faces of the believers and take them to the mountain at-Tur, a place of refuge from the hordes of Yajuj and Majuj (Gog and Magog, on whom see below).

The Appearance of Yajuj and Majuj

Yajuj and Majuj (Gog and Magog) are mentioned in the Qur'an in Surah 21 (al-Anbiya): 96.

Until Yajuj and Majuj are let through (their barrier), and they swiftly swarm from every hill.

A fuller reference occurs in Surah 18 (al-Kahf): 93-101

Then he [Dhu'l-Qarnain] followed (another) way, until, when he reached (a tract) between two mountains, he found beneath them, a people who scarcely understood a word. They said: 'Dhu'l-Qarnain! Yajuj and Majuj do great mischief on earth: shall we render you tribute in order that you erect a barrier between us and them?' He said: '(The power) in which My Lord has established me is better (than tribute): help me therefore with strength (and labour): I will erect a strong barrier between you and them: bring me blocks of iron.' At length, when he had filled up the space between the two steep mountain-sides, he said, 'Blow (with your bellows)'. Then, when he had made it (red) as fire, he said: 'Bring me, that I may pour over it, molten lead.' Thus they were made powerless to scale it or to dig through it. He said: 'This is a mercy from my Lord: but when the promise of my Lord comes to pass, He will make it into dust; and the promise of my Lord is true.' On that day We shall leave them to surge like waves on one another; the trumpet will be blown, and We shall gather them all together. And We shall present Jahannam that day for Unbelievers to see, all spread out – (Unbelievers) whose eyes had been under a veil from Remembrance of Me, and who had been unable to hear.'

A hadith relates how Zaynab bint Jahsh said that the Messenger of Allah came to visit her one day in a state of anxiety, saying:

'There is no god but Allah. Woe to the Arabs because of the evil which has grown near. Today an opening has been made in the barrier restraining Yajuj and Majuj to this extent,' and he made a circle with his thumb and forefinger. Zaynab said, 'I asked, "Messenger of Allah, will we be destroyed when there are right-acting people among us?"' He replied, 'Yes, when wickedness abounds.'

From the above references it is clear that Yajuj and Majuj are thought of as a vast company of people who, after having been restrained between two mountains, will be released to perform great mischief on the earth. Dhu'l-Qarnain may be Alexander the Great, who performed the feat of incarcerating Gog and Magog in earlier Christian apocalyptic. The barrier behind which he locked them, according to the Qur'an, will one day, by the will of Allah, be removed, allowing the enemies of Allah's people to pass through. Tradition holds that Yajuj and Majuj will appear after the killing of the Dajjal, and that they will rush out in all directions, spreading corruption, uprooting plants and killing people. Then Allah will command 'Isa to take his followers to the mountain of at-Tur, where they will pray for help against their enemies. Allah will send a kind of worm to attack them on the napes of their necks, and they will be killed by it. After the death of Yajuj and Majuj, peace and security will prevail everywhere; no two people will be at enmity; a child will play with snakes without suffering any harm; and lions will graze with camels, tigers with cattle, and wolves with sheep. This peace and security will come to an end with the death of 'Isa, peace be upon him. [It is at least of curiosity value that the Muslims traditionally identified Yajuj and Majuj with tribes living north of the Caucasus mountains. When they encountered the fierce heathen tribe of the Khazar they were convinced that they were them. They did not know at that time that

the Khazar would accept Judaism en masse and, as Ashkenazi Jews, become the dominant force in world Jewry. See *The Thirteenth Tribe* by Arthur Koestler – Ed.]

The Appearance of the Beast

A monster known as the 'Beast of the Earth' (*Dabbat al-Ard*) also plays a part in Islamic scenarios of the end. It is mentioned in the Qur'an:

And when the Word is fulfilled against them (the unjust), We shall produce from the earth a Beast to (face) them: he will speak to them, 'Truly mankind did not believe with assurance in Our Signs.' (Surat an-Naml: 84)

'The beast will be one of the Signs of the last days to come, before the present World passes away and the new World is brought into being.' It will emerge near Makkah after the death of 'Isa. It will have with it the ring of Sulayman and the rod of Musa. It will destroy the nose of every unbeliever with the rod and write the word *kafir* (one who covers over the truth, or 'ingrate') on his forehead, while the word *mu'min* (believer) will be written on the foreheads of the believers. 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr is reported to have said,

I memorised a hadith from the Prophet which I have not since forgotten. I heard the Prophet say, 'The first of the signs [of the Hour] to appear will be the rising of the sun from the west and the appearance of the Beast before the people in the forenoon; whichever of these two events happens first, the other will follow immediately.'

The Day of Judgment

The Day of Judgment itself is mentioned frequently in the Qur'an and the events of the Hour described in considerable detail. Less of the picture was, therefore, left to later commentators to complete, though tradition naturally added many embellishments and refinements.

The Trumpet Blasts and the Resurrection

Despite all the signs that precede it, the exact time of the coming of the Hour will still be uncertain. The Day of Judgment itself will be inaugurated by a series of trumpet blasts. Surah 39 distinguish at least two blasts, the first of which will result in the death of all living beings, except for a privileged few, the second of which will bring about a general resurrection:

The Trumpet will (just) be sounded and all that are in the heavens and on earth will swoon, except such as it shall please Allah (to exempt). Then will a second one be sounded and at once they will be standing looking on! (Surat az-Zumar: 65)

According to tradition the trumpet will be blown by the angel Israfil and the period between the blast of extinction and the blast of resurrection will be forty years. We noted earlier that Ka'b al-Ahbar interpreted the 'place quite near' in Surah 50 (Qaf): 41, as a rock in al-Quds from which an angel would proclaim, 'O rotten bones, come and gather for judgment' (see Chapter Four above).

The resurrection will be general and involve not only those killed in the great annihilation of all things at the first trumpet blast, but all those who have died earlier. As happened before to all the Prophets, the doctrine of resurrection poses problems for the unbelievers, and it is clear from many passages in the Qur'an that the possibility of the dead coming back to life, even after their bodies have long decayed is rejected by many. Allah addresses their doubts in a variety of ways. He ta'ala points out the correspondence between creation and resurrection: Allah created the world out of nothing, so surely it is possible for Him to raise the dead back to life. Thus in Surah 22 (al-Hajj): 5 we read:

O mankind: if you have a doubt about the Resurrection, (consider) that We created you out of dust.

So too Allah draws the analogy of the growth of plants under the revivifying power of the rain for resurrection of the dead:

It is Allah who sends forth the winds, so that they raise up the clouds, and We drive them to a land that is dead, and revive the earth therewith after its death: even so (will be) the Resurrection! (Surat al-Fatir: 9)

Just as a seed falls into the ground and decays, but from that decay new life springs up, so the human body is like a seed sown in the ground. This idea was developed in tradition further in the claim that the body does not totally perish. There is an incorruptible bone (the '*ajb az-zanab*') within it which will serve at the resurrection as the basis, or seed, from which the body will be reconstructed. This idea is found also in Jewish sources. Note, for example, Leviticus Rabba XVIII 1:

And the almond shall blossom refers to the *luz* (nut) of the spinal column. Hadrian, may his bones be crushed, asked Rabbi Joshua ibn Hananiah, saying: 'From what part of the body will the Holy One, blessed be He, in the time to come, cause man to sprout forth?' He answered: 'From the nut of the spinal column.' 'How can you convince me?' He thereupon brought one before him; he put it in water, but it was not dissolved; he let it pass through millstones, but it was not ground; he put it in fire, but it was not burnt; he put it on an anvil and began beating it with a hammer, but the anvil was flattened out, and the hammer was split, but all this had no effect.

The doctrine of resurrection also posed another problem to the unbelievers. As had happened to the Prophets of the Children of Israel, the unbelievers found the fate of people between their death and the resurrection an issue, and they seem to have found it problematic to suppose that the wicked and the righteous would await the resurrection in identical conditions. However, this is not the case since there is the punishment of the grave (*'adhab*

al-qabr): there is a preliminary examination of each person by angels when they die. The idolaters, disbelievers and hypocrites are severely punished by beating, and the people of tawhid who have right action are rewarded in their graves with a foretaste of the Garden. This is clear from a number of ayat and supported by numerous ahadith.

The Great Assize

The dead will be gathered together for judgment to the Place of Gathering (*al-mahshar*). Where this place will be is disputed, but according to one tradition it will be the Holy Land. However, that is only according to the understanding of those who think of the Day of Judgement as a physical event in a space and time which is this very space and time we inhabit or something very similar to it. Another view is that the Day of Judgement takes place outside of space and time, and therefore the descriptions of it in physical terms are pictures for us to understand something which is outside of our normal experience. All will stand waiting to be judged and during this period of standing (*al-mawqif*) will to greater or lesser degree suffer the terrors of waiting and will 'sweat with agony'. Man's own self will be his accuser and one of the witnesses against him. Allah Himself will be the Judge. Each will be examined as to his words and deeds, all of which will be recorded in books. The angel Jibril will hold the scales (*mawazin*) in which the merits and demerits of each individual will be most accurately weighed. Those whose merits outweigh their demerits, even by a hair, will be allowed to enter into the Garden, the rest will be consigned to the torments of the Fire. It must be remembered that the decisive factor in all of this is tawhid, a clear experiential knowledge and affirmation of the Divine unity. Those who have tawhid even though they have serious wrong actions will not stay permanently in the Fire and will go to the Garden. The people who attribute partners to Allah, even though their actions are all 'good' will enter the Fire and abide in it.

According to tradition the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, will play an important role as intercessor at the judgment. This intercession (*shafa'ah*) will be on behalf of the people of tawhid. On the terrible Day of Judgment believers will feel the need for an advocate and intercessor. They will turn first to Adam, who will remind them that he was the cause of wrong action entering the world. He will refer them to Nuh, who will also decline and refer them to Ibrahim. And so all the great prophets will be appealed to and decline until 'Isa will suggest that Muhammad's assistance be sought. Allah will grant to the Messenger of Allah permission to make intercession, then the believers will be allowed to enter Paradise.

Hell and Paradise

The reward of the right-acting people of tawhid will be *al-Jannah*, 'the Garden', the highest of which is said to be *Jannat al-Firdaws*, 'the Garden of Paradise [the English word 'Paradise' derives from the broken plural of *Firdaws* which is *Faradis*]. The punishment of those who associated partners with Allah will be the Fire or Jahannam. According to tradition, everyone after the judgment will have to pass across a narrow bridge (*sirat*) that spans the pit of the Fire. The right acting people of tawhid will cross it safely, those who associated partners with Allah will fall off into the flames of the Fire. Some commentators saw an allusion to this Bridge in the Qur'anic verse:

'Assemble', [it shall be said], 'the wrongdoers and their wives, and the things they worshipped besides Allah, and lead them on the way to the (Fierce) Fire (*sirat al-Jahim*)!' (Surat as-Saffat: 22-23)

Before entering the Garden the people of tawhid will refresh themselves with sweet water at the Cistern (*hawd*) of the Messenger of Allah. In tradition the geography of the Garden is complex, with many different compartments and divisions. Later tradition systematised the picture by representing it as cone-shaped. It has

eight zones, one more than the Fire. There are eight names for the Garden in the Qur'an. The extra part of the Garden is *al-Maqam al-Mahmud* which is for one person only, and it is believed that he is the Messenger of Allah. On top stands the Lote-tree of the Furthest Limit, whose branches overshadow the whole of Garden. Just as in the traditions deriving from the Children of Israel there is a heavenly Temple corresponding to the earthly Temple in al-Quds, so in Muslim eschatology there is to be found in the Garden 'the Much Frequented House', that is the heavenly counterpart of the Ka'bah. The Garden is normally located by tradition beyond the planetary spheres, rather than in some remote region of the earth, as in some early Jewish apocalyptic texts. That is probably best thought of as being beyond space and time as we understand them.

The pleasures which the believers will enjoy there are described in very sensual terms, but the tradition has always recognized that the joys of the Garden will also be intellectual and spiritual.

The Fire too has a complex geography. This is already implied in the Qur'an:

And truly, Jahannam is the promised abode for them all! It has seven gates: for each of these gates is a (special) class (of wrongdoers) assigned. (Surat al-Hijr: 43-44)

Tradition was to systematise the geography of hell into seven circles or levels, each with its own name derived from the Qur'an and reserved for a particular type of idolater, who will suffer there punishments appropriate to his wrong doing: the first level is called Jahannam (Surah 19 [Maryam]: 71); the second is called Ladha (Surah 70 [al-Ma'arij]: 15); the third is called al-Hutamah (Surah 104 [al-Humazah]: 4); the fourth is called as-Sa'ir (Surah 4 [an-Nisa']: 10); the fifth is called Saqar (Surah 54 [al-Qamar]: 48); the sixth is called al-Jahim (Surah 37 [as-Saffat]: 23); and the seventh is called al-Hawiyah (Surah 101 [al-Qari'ah]: 9). Some see the first level as a kind of purgatory for Muslims. After pun-

ishment there for their serious wrong actions, they will, through the intercession of the Prophet, be admitted to the Garden, the affects of their punishment being washed away with water from the well of life. A textual proof for this is found in the Qur'an in the ayah:

Not one of you but will pass into it (Jahannam); this is, with your Lord, a decree which must be accomplished. (Surah Maryam: 71)

But some commentators interpret the verse differently, translating, 'Not one of you but will pass over it', seeing a reference here to the Bridge (*Sirat*) over which all must pass to their final destiny (see above). Allah ta'ala clearly states that the torments of the damned will be eternal. The Christians used to have this view, but not the Jews, who hold that the wicked will be totally annihilated after a limited period of punishment (see above). Allah ta'ala also refers to their belief that the Fire would not touch except for a few days:

'They say, "The Fire will not touch us except for a number of days." Say, "Have you made a contract with Allah – then Allah will not break His contract – or are you saying something about Allah which you do not know?"' (Surat al-Baqarah: 79)

Summary: The Place of Jerusalem in Islamic Eschatology

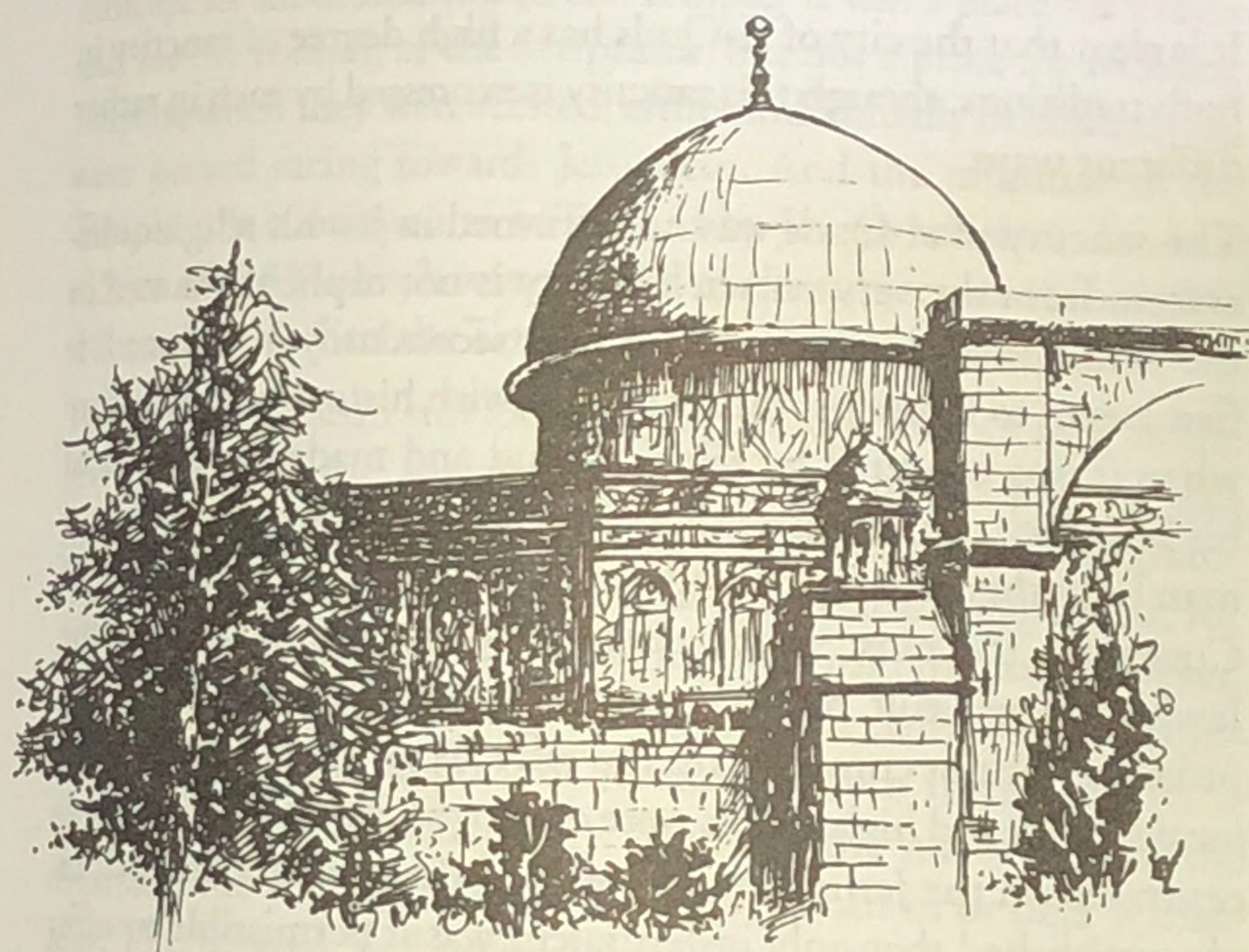
There are many similarities between Jewish and Muslim scenarios of the end of history, some of which can be a result of the Jews having held to some fragment of the revelation granted the ancient prophets, and unfortunately some of which can be ascribed to Isra'iliyyat infiltrating Islam. Both predict that the end of history will be preceded by a series of signs consisting of prodigies in the world of nature and of disorder, political chaos, trials and tribulations in the political realm. Both look forward to a Day of

Judgment in which the wrongs of this world will be redressed and each man will be called to account by Allah for his words and deeds. This judgment will take place after a general resurrection in which all who lived since the time of Adam will be brought back to life to stand before Allah's Throne. Both see the final reward of the believers who have tawhid and right action as being the joys of the Garden and the final punishment of those who ascribed partners to Allah and did wrong action as being the torments of Fire.

But there are also very important differences between the two eschatologies. In the Jewish scenario of the end the people of Israel play a central role. There is a strong emphasis on the restoration of Israel as a nation, on the rebuilding of Jerusalem and its Temple, and on the re-establishment of the Dawudic monarchy. Jerusalem and Israel will be the centre of the world to come.

This nationalist emphasis is, not surprisingly, absent from the Islamic sources. There the stress is on the judgment of the individual, and on the salvation or damnation of the individual. The Islamic scenario is thus more universal. However, the connection between Jerusalem and the Day of Judgment is by no means absent from Islamic tradition. The Prophet is reported to have said that one of the six things to be counted before the Hour will be the conquest of Bait al-Maqdis. We noted how the Dajjal, despite conquering the rest of the world, will be unable to enter three holy cities, of which Bait al-Maqdis will be one. 'Isa when he descends will go towards al-Quds and join there in prayer with the believers, and it is near al-Quds (at Lud) that he will kill the Dajjal. Allah will protect al-Quds from the depredations of the hordes of Yajuj and Majuj, who will not enter the city but be destroyed near there. And one tradition claims that the Mahdi, the eschatological rightly-guided leader, will live in al-Quds. And Bait al-Maqdis will be the land of gathering and of resurrection, and it will be from the rock in al-Quds that the angel will blow the trumpet to bring the dead back to life. Thus in Muslim tra-

dition too Bait al-Maqdis retains its sanctity and its special status and sanctity even in the future, and plays an important part in history towards the end of time.



Chapter 7

Summary and Conclusions

We have completed our study of the place of the City of al-Quds in both classic Judaic and classic Muslim sources, and in this concluding chapter we will attempt to draw some conclusions.

It is clear that the city of al-Quds has a high degree of sanctity in both traditions, though this sanctity is expressed by each in rather different ways.

The sanctity of al-Quds was not affirmed in Jewish religious literature from the very outset. The city is not explicitly named in the Torah, though allusions to it were secondarily introduced. It first began to figure prominently in Jewish history and literature when it was captured by King Dawud and made the capital of his kingdom. Its importance was further increased when Sulayman built there the first Temple, in which was housed the Ark of Covenant, the most sacred object of what was to become the Jewish national cult, but its dominance as a religious centre within Judaism was not complete till the reforms of Josiah in which the local shrines and high-places were destroyed, priestly activity concentrated on the Jerusalem Temple and the fundamental principle established that only in Jerusalem was it permissible to offer sacrifice to God. With the reforms of Josiah, Jerusalem achieved within Judaism a standing which it was never to lose, despite the destruction of the Temple by the Babylonians and the exile of many of the people to Babylon. In the exile, prophets such as Ezekiel comforted the people with the promise of a return to the Land and a rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Temple. There was

Summary and Conclusions

no attempt, it seems, to build substitute temples in the exile. The promise of return was in due course realised under Cyrus the Persian, and the Second Temple built.

A similar pattern was repeated after the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans. Though Jews were not permitted to reside in Jerusalem, and though they had lost their national shrine, the City and its Temple still remained in a sense central to their religious worldview. No attempts were made to build Jewish temples elsewhere. The synagogue, which took on a central role as the place of communal worship for Jews, continued in symbolic ways to indicate its subordination to the Temple. It was a place for prayer and for the reading of the Scriptures, but not a place for sacrifice. Prayers, when they were recited, either individually or collectively, were prayed facing towards Jerusalem. And the minutiae of the Temple cult continued to be studied by Jewish scholars. A whole section of the Mishnah was devoted to the subject, even though it was compiled when the Temple was no longer standing.

Traditional Judaism still looks for the restoration not only of the Jewish state in the ancient Land of Israel, but as part of that restoration it expects the rebuilding of the Temple and the restoration of the sacrifices. This expectation is clearly expressed, for example, in a number of the benedictions from the central prayer, the Shemoneh 'Esreh, which is prayed twice daily. The continuing centrality and sanctity of Jerusalem, even in the future, is affirmed in Jewish eschatology. Many of the major acts of the drama of the Messianic age will be played out in or near Jerusalem. The Messiah will rebuild the City and its Temple, and will rule from there. There he will defeat the enemies of the Jews – Gog and Magog, Armilus and the rest. There the ingathering of the exiles will take place. There the dead will be raised. The future role of Jerusalem within Jewish theology unquestionably prevented any other Jewish centre from usurping Jerusalem's place in the Jewish scheme of things.

The city of Jerusalem is holy to Jews because it bears an especially close relationship to God. It is part of the Land promised by Allah to Ibrahim and his descendants when he made his special covenant with them. Jerusalem, and particularly the site of the Temple, are sanctified because there Ibrahim and Ishaq demonstrated their devotion to Allah in the Aqedah. Holiness has degrees within Judaism, and the most holy place in the Judaic world, as the 'map' in Mishnah Kelim with its concentric circles of holiness clearly expresses, is the Holy of Holies within the Jerusalem Temple. Holiness is linked to the concept of ritual purity. Holy space is holy because it can only be entered by people who are in the right condition of ritual purity. Thus special laws applied to Jerusalem and even more to the Temple, which did not operate anywhere else. A corpse could not remain in Jerusalem overnight, because the ritual uncleanness which it caused would defile the city. And no-one could enter the Temple without cleansing who had touched a corpse, or who had suffered sexual pollution. Some categories of people were absolutely forbidden to enter certain areas because they could never acquire the requisite level of purity. Gentiles could only enter the outer courts of the Temple. Jewish women could not penetrate into the sanctuary as far as could Jewish men. Priests could enter areas which ordinary Israelites were forbidden to enter, and only one priest, the High Priest, was permitted to enter the Holy of Holies, and that was only on one day in the year, the Day of Atonement.

The centrality of Jerusalem within the Judaic universe was also affirmed mythologically. It was claimed that Jerusalem is the navel of the earth. This was taken in a cosmogonic sense. Just as the foetus grows in the womb of the mother from the navel, so the world, when it was created, grew outwards from Jerusalem. The foundation stone of the world was identified precisely with the bare rock now housed within the Dome of the Rock. Jerusalem and its Temple on earth correspond to a heavenly Jerusalem and

a heavenly Temple. The terrestrial entities stand directly underneath their celestial counterparts. Jerusalem is the gate to heaven, where communication with the upper world is particularly easy. It also stands directly above Gehinnom, the underworld, where the wicked are punished.

This mythology has been used from time to time in Jewish history for political ends. The assertion that Jerusalem is the navel of the earth probably originated at the time of the Hasmonaean revolution and was a way of asserting both Jewish political independence of the Greeks, who held that the Greek national shrine at Delphi was the navel of the earth, and the centrality of Jerusalem within the Jewish world, which even then embraced a far-flung Diaspora. Both the Hasmonaean and Herod valued the political power of the Jewish Diaspora and its financial contributions to the Jewish State, in the form of the Temple tax. Both probably encouraged pilgrimage to Jerusalem as a way of boosting their power and the economy of the city. The mythology was again invoked for political purposes in the Talmudic period, when the Rabbinate in Palestine began once again to stress it, probably because they were concerned about the growing power and influence within world Jewry of the great Rabbinic schools of Babylon. In more modern times the rhetoric of Zionism, even secular Zionism, has often echoed the traditional mythology about the centrality of Jerusalem to Jews, as a way of encouraging the allegiance of the Diaspora to the Jewish State.

The sanctity of al-Quds within Islam is expressed rather differently. Al-Quds has sanctity for Muslims because of the events that took place there within Muslim sacred history which extends to the beginning of time. Islam follows in the traditions of the ancient Hebrew prophets and in the tradition of 'Isa, and therefore the events and the places associated with the lives of those prophets are as much a part of Islamic sacred history as they are of Jewish or Christian. Islam also corrects the errors and

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falsifications that have crept into Judaism and Christianity. The assertion of the sanctity of Jerusalem for Muslims is fundamentally an assertion of the continuity of Islam with a tradition going back to Ibrahim and beyond. When 'Umar captured Jerusalem, the steps which he took to reclaim the area of the Bait al-Maqdis and to build mosques there proclaimed this idea in no uncertain terms. He was not, strictly speaking, Islamicising Bait al-Maqdis, but re-Islamicising it, that is to say, returning it to the pure faith of Ibrahim which had been corrupted by both Judaism and Christianity. The orientation of Islam on this older tradition was literally expressed in the first Qiblah, which was towards al-Quds.

There is a similar significance in the Prophet Muhammad's Isra and Mi'raj. The destination of the Night Journey was 'the Farthest Mosque (*al-Masjid al-Aqsa*)' in al-Quds. There he led all the great prophets in prayer. And it was from al-Quds that he made his ascent into heaven and received confirmation of his divine mission, just as many of the great prophets of the past had done. Bait al-Maqdis gains further sanctity, consequently, in the eyes of Muslims because of its association with important events specifically in the life of the Prophet. His connection with al-Quds is symbolised by the Aqsa mosque, which marks where he ended his Night Journey. Bait al-Maqdis is the third most holy city of Islam, following Makkah and Madinah, and because of its associations with sacred history it was taught that meritorious acts performed in al-Quds carry an additional reward.

Al-Quds also plays a part in Islamic eschatology. According to one tradition, it will be the place where the trumpet will be blown to announce the resurrection of the dead, and the Place of Gathering where the dead will assemble for judgment. In the wars of Yajuj and Majuj and of the Dajjal it will be protected by special divine protection, just like the holy cities of Makkah and Madinah. 'Isa, when he comes back to earth, will go to Bait al-Maqdis

and join there in the prayers of the faithful, and near it he will kill the Dajjal. The eschatological Mahdi, the rightly-guided Caliph, will appear in Makkah and go to Jerusalem.

But there are important differences between the role of Jerusalem in the Jewish and the Muslim scenarios of the end of history. Jewish eschatology is strongly nationalistic: the Jewish people, the restored Jewish State, Jewish Jerusalem and the Jewish Temple are central to its vision of the future. This nationalism is absent from Islamic eschatology, which is more universal and which focuses more on the judgment of all humankind, the rewarding of right-acting believers and the punishment of the wrongdoing idolaters. In keeping with this view, al-Quds does not play in Islamic eschatology as central a role as it does in Jewish eschatology, and, indeed, Islamic eschatology is generally not precise about the geography of the last days, whereas Jewish eschatology is very precise. [That is in accordance with our view that the Islamic revelation and traditions describe an out of space-time event in a metaphorical manner for people who can only visualise space-time events, whereas Judaism, because of its great antiquity and the embellishments and falsifications of the rabbis, depicts in a folkloric manner a longed-for revenge over the *goyim* by a people who had been despised, conquered and suppressed, and a supernatural reward and vindication. – Ed.]

Moreover, there is a certain tension within Islamic thought between al-Quds and Makkah. Within Islam, al-Quds does not have as great a sanctity as Makkah. Makkah is now the direction of the Qiblah. Makkah, not al-Quds, is the navel of the earth, the 'mother of cities'. Islam asserts that events which Jewish tradition locates at al-Quds actually took place at, or near, Makkah. The most striking case of this phenomenon is the story of Ibrahim's sacrifice. According to Jewish tradition, the son 'sacrificed' was Ishaq and the event occurred on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, at the very spot where later the altar of burnt offering was

erected. According to much of Muslim tradition the son 'sacrificed' was Isma'il but Islam is categoric that the event took place near Makkah, and afterwards Ibrahim and Isma'il rebuilt the Ka'bah. Islamic tradition does not deny that the Land of Israel and al-Quds were promised to the biblical Children of Israel, but, in keeping with certain prophetic statements within the Hebrew Bible, and with the general tenor of Allah ta'ala's references to the ancient prophets in order to reinforce His teaching, the promise is conditional, and depended on the Jews obeying the Law of Allah. Only the righteous will inherit the Land. [Moreover, as Arthur Koestler ably demonstrated in *The Thirteenth Tribe*, the great majority of world Jewry are Turkic in origin, being descended from the Khazars of the Caucasus, and thus are not 'Jewish' because not from Judah, and are certainly not 'Israelis' thus having no biblical claim to Palestine at all. — Ed.]

Isra'iliyyat

In the course of our study we noted many close parallels between Jewish and Muslim tradition. Some of these related to traditions within the Hebrew Bible, others to post-Biblical Jewish traditions. These Jewish traditions within Islam are known collectively as the Isra'iliyyat. There has been much speculation both by Muslim and by non-Muslim scholars as to the origins of the Isra'iliyyat. European scholars have usually regarded the Isra'iliyyat as straight borrowings from Judaism, and where the forms of the traditions differ, as in the story of Ibrahim's sacrifice, have assumed that the Jewish form has priority, and that the Islamic form is an adaptation, or even distortion of it.

This view has a long history within European scholarship, and in certain of its formulations it has had a polemical, even anti-Islamic purpose. This point can be illustrated from the work of George Sale, the eighteenth century English scholar whose translation of the Qur'an, and the *Preliminary Discourse* with which he prefaced it (first published in 1734), strongly influenced Eu-

ropean understanding of Islam in the early modern period. The translation was praised by Voltaire, who claimed, quite erroneously, that Sale had spent a quarter of a century in Arab lands. Sale's *Preliminary Discourse* is a remarkably learned work. Its section on Islamic eschatology is still one of the fullest and best accounts of the subject in English. It is referred to not only in the first edition, but even in the second edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* a seriously contaminated work based on the quite arrogant and unscientific premise that Islam is a lie and all Muslims have lied or been ignorantly stupid from the beginning of Islam. Sale is at pains, wherever possible, to show how Muhammad and Islamic tradition simply borrowed ideas from the Jews. This is more than disinterested and objective scholarship, for Sale makes no effort to conceal his hostility to, and at times contempt for, Islam. The charge of borrowing from Judaism is doubly effective from his point of view. First, it robs Islam of much of its originality; it becomes a second-hand, derivative faith. But second, it attributes much of Islam to what, for Sale as a Protestant Christian, would be a very dubious source, viz., Judaism. Judaism for Protestants of Sale's persuasion was a dead legalism, full of fanciful 'fables' and lacking in sobriety, so to say that much of Islam was derived from it would have been anything but a compliment.

Western scholarship on Islam has undoubtedly moved on since the time of Sale, but it is noticeable that it still tends to stress the derivative character of Islam rather than its originality. In the case of eschatology, with the notable exception of Miguel Asin Palacios, it tends to assume a one-way traffic of influence, from Judaism and Christianity to Islam, even when dealing with post-Islamic Jewish and Christian traditions in which influence in the other direction is at least possible.

Traditional Islamic scholarship explains the Isra'iliyyat in a variety of ways. Broadly speaking it draws a distinction between Isra'il-

iyyat within the Qur'an and authentic ahadith ascribed to the Prophet, and Isra'iliyyat in the rest of Islamic literature. In the case of the latter, it has no difficulty in acknowledging borrowings from Judaism. Many Jews over the years converted to Islam and brought with them their stock of traditions, stories and ideas, some of which they wove into the fabric of their new faith. Whether these are valid or not does not touch on any principle of faith. In the case of the Isra'iliyyat within the ahadith ascribed to the Prophet the situation is more complex. Where Islamic and Jewish forms of the tradition agree, there is little problem. Many Muslim scholars, taking heed from the sciences of hadith which have stringent criteria on evaluating texts particularly with respect to the chains of narrators, hesitate to make use of any material from the Jews and Christians at all, regarding all of them as suspect, except perhaps some of that material brought into Islam by learned and trustworthy converts. Some Islamic scholars, however, readily cite Jewish tradition to throw light on, or to supplement, Islamic tradition, even in cases where the Jewish tradition is simply compatible with the Muslim tradition, but they will make a major distinction between Biblical and Post-Biblical Jewish tradition in this context. From an Islamic standpoint this is logical. Islam acknowledges that the Children of Israel had many genuine Prophets who were recipients of divine revelation. However, the Children of Israel were cut off from revelation forever after the disappearance of 'Isa. The period down to the time of the Prophet Muhammad is known as the '*fatrah*', i.e. the gap of time between Prophets. Therefore, we must at least distinguish between Biblical and post-Biblical tradition. Where the Jewish and the Islamic forms of a tradition disagree, however, traditional Islamic scholars have no hesitation in assigning primacy to the Muslim form of the tradition where the Muslim form itself adheres to the criteria of authentication of texts.

In our study we have carefully avoided presenting an opinion on

the question of the origin of the Isra'iliyyat. We have restricted ourselves simply to drawing attention to the similarities and the differences between the two traditions.

Al-Quds Today

We have seen how al-Quds functions as a place and as a symbol within two salvation histories – the salvation history of Judaism and the salvation history of Islam. These two histories are scarcely compatible. These two histories influence the attitudes of real people, and impinge upon the real history of Bait al-Maqdis. The real and tragic history of al-Quds today is in part the result of the clash between these competing salvation histories. There is no doubt that a major section of the Jewish people felt a genuine spiritual need to re-establish the Biblical teachings of Judaism in Palestine, and that Allah, who is generous and who answers even the prayers of disbelievers, gave them the land. However, as we have seen, the Jewish salvation history is an exclusively national one with no place in its scheme for the rest of humanity. So long as this national salvation history is pitted against Islam's universal vision of salvation for mankind there cannot be peace. Only Islam is acceptable to Allah the Lord of the Universe. Judaism was once a form of Islam with a powerful sense and vision of universal justice. However, in becoming Judaism and in rejecting both 'Isa, who was sent to them by Allah from among themselves speaking in their own language, and the Messenger of Allah the Jews have locked themselves into a concentration camp mentality. It is clear that when the Jews have the upper hand life becomes intolerable for other peoples, since others are not invited or welcomed into Judaism and yet they are not seen as having any real existence outside of it. Islam alone contains a universal vision for mankind regardless of race. If the Jews were to enter into Islam they would instantly become the brothers of a quarter of humanity. However, historically Islam always offered a second option: it offers to the peoples of previ-

ous revelations, the People of the Book, the possibility of their living under Islamic governance but according to what remains to them of their own revelations. This accommodation allowed the Jews to attain their greatest cultural heights, as for example in Islamic Andalusia. Perhaps thus an accommodation may be found between the competing histories.

We can conclude from this study that the Jews historically have no right in al-Quds and Palestine as a whole. Previously Canaanites lived in Jerusalem over hundreds of years earlier than the Jews.

Religiously, the Children of Israel could not be the true inheritors of al-Quds as they rejected Musa and refused to obey him. When Musa commanded them to enter the land, they refused by saying, 'Go you, and your Lord, and fight you two, while we sit here (and watch),' (Surah 5 [al-Ma'idah]: 27). Their entire history, as found in the Bible and their own historical and mythological works, is that of repudiation of some of the Prophets and murder of others, culminating in their rejection of Yahya and 'Isa, peace be upon them, and sealed with their refusal to accept the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, even though the Jews of the time recognised him and were, indeed, waiting for his arrival.

Therefore, from the evidence discussed in this work the rightful inheritors of al-Quds are the Muslims who affirm all of the Prophets without distinction and follow His orders and beware of His prohibitions. Evidentially, history bears witness that Muslims alone guarantee freedom of worship to all faiths, whilst providing safety for all citizens of al-Quds. In the past when Jews ruled over Jerusalem they banned Christians from entering the city. However, at present the massacres in al-Aqsa mosque and al-Khalil mosque (Hebron) are further evidence of Jewish failure to guarantee the safety of worshippers.

Demolishing non-Jewish homes also demonstrates conclusively

that Jerusalemites are denied freedom to live in their own city.

As for the Christians, when the Crusaders captured al-Quds they massacred seventy-thousand of its inhabitants who were mostly Muslims but included Christians and Jews as well. The Crusaders converted the Dome of the Rock into a church by placing a cross on top of it, and they used al-Aqsa Mosque as a stable to keep horses.

In contrast, when the Muslims first captured Jerusalem, 'Umar ibn al-Khattab wrote a covenant which guaranteed the safety of Christians, their possessions and their freedom of worship. This document was truly a magnificent testimony to the highest qualities of the Muslims against which the tawdry documents on 'Human Rights' look decisively pathetic, particularly when shown against the records of abuses.

When Salahu'd-Din captured Jerusalem from the Crusaders he re-implemented 'Umar's covenant in spite of the brutal excesses of the Christians. Ultimately if the entire world truly strives for peace in the city of al-Quds, Muslims must retake the upperhand and regain its rule, as they alone would provide continuously the guarantee of freedom of worship and safety for the citizens of the city and they will re-implement 'Umar's Covenant for a third time. Only then will al-Quds be, as it is meant to be, a City of Peace.

Glossary of Jewish Names and Terms

Arabic

is "the southwest Semitic language of the Arabs, which is now (in a variety of dialects) the prevailing language of the Arabian peninsula and most of the Middle East and North Africa." (First edition of the *Reader's Digest Universal Dictionary*)

Aramaic

is "a northwest Semitic language used as the commercial *lingua franca* for nearly all of southwest Asia after about 300 BC, and still spoken in parts of Syria and Lebanon." (First edition of the *Reader's Digest Universal Dictionary*)

Bible

The Bible, which is the sacred book of the Christians, is composed of the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament, known as the Hebrew Bible, comprises 39 books according to Christians but 24 books according to Jews. The first five books are called the Pentateuch by the Christians and the Torah by the Jews. The full text of the Old Testament, or Hebrew Bible, was compiled in its present form by rabbis in Alexandria around the 2nd century CE.

Biblical Aramaic

is "a form of Aramaic that was the original language of the non-Hebrew portions of the Old Testament, such as certain passages in Ezra, Daniel, and Jeremiah." (First edition of the *Reader's Digest Universal Dictionary*)

Chaldee

is "the Semitic language of the Chaldeans ... an ancient Semitic people who ruled in Babylonia" and whose empire "reached its height under Nebuchadnezzar II (605–562 B.C.), who extended the kingdom to include Syria and Palestine, and rebuilt Babylon." Chaldee is also known as "Biblical Aramaic". (First edition of the *Reader's Digest Universal Dictionary*)

Deuteronomy

During the hundred years that followed the Assyrian conquest of Israel in 722 BCE, the Levites in Judah began to compile the written Law. In 621 BCE, they produced Deuteronomy and read it to the people in the Temple at Jerusalem. This was the birth of "the Mosaic Law", which Musa never knew. It is called the Mosaic Law because it is attributed to him, but authorities agree that it was the product of the Levites. Its correct description would be "the Levitical law" or "the Judaic law". Deuteronomy is the basis of the Torah ("the Law") contained in the Pentateuch (the Five Books), which itself forms the raw material of the Talmud, which again gave birth to those "commentaries" and

commentaries-on-commentaries which together constitute the Judaic "law". Deuteronomy means "Second Law". Deuteronomy, in fact, was Levitical *Judaism*. Deuteronomy, which appears as the fifth book of today's Bible with an air of growing naturally out of the previous ones, was the first book to be completed as a whole. Though Genesis and Exodus provide the historical background and setting for it, they were later produced by the Levites in Babylon, and Leviticus and Numbers, the other books of the **Torah**, were compiled even later. Genesis and Exodus provide a version of history moulded to fit the "Law" which the Levites by then had already promulgated, in Deuteronomy. This goes right back to the Creation, of which the Scribes claimed to know the exact date (however the first two chapters of Genesis give somewhat different accounts of the Creation).

Gemara

These are the two commentaries on the **Mishnah**: the Jerusalem Gemara and the Babylonian Gemara. They were not completed until the fifth and seventh centuries CE respectively.

Hebrew

is "the Semitic language of the ancient Hebrews, used in most of the Old Testament", and secondly, "any of various later forms of this language, especially the form now spoken by the people of

Israel and Judah

Israel." (First edition of the *Reader's Digest Universal Dictionary*)

The original twelve tribes of Israel descended from the sons of Ya'qub who was also known as Isra'il, (the son of Ishaq, the son of Ibrahim, peace be upon them), were Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issacher, Zebulun, Benjamin, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher and Joseph. They settled down in their respective parts of the Holy Land in about the 13th century BCE. Later on, after the death of the Prophet Sulayman, peace be upon him, the twelve tribes of Israel split into two distinct entities, called Israel and Judah. During the passage of time, a separation occurred, between the tribes of Judah and the Levites (and some of the tribe of Benjamin) who were settled in the south of the Holy Land, on the one hand, and the other ten tribes of Israel who were settled in the north, on the other hand. The tribes in the north became known as the Israelites, and the tribes in the south became known as the Judahites.

Midrash

The very extensive Midrash literature comprises commentaries written on the commentaries on the **Mishnah**, which are called the Jerusalem **Gemara** and the Babylonian **Gemara**, and were written between 400 and 1200 CE.

Mishnah

The Mishnah is the written form of the alleged oral traditions of Musa. It is

largely composed of rabbinical material. Work on the Mishnah began around about 70 CE, i.e. around the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. It was not collated in its present form until the beginning of the third century CE.

Musa (Moses)

Sayyiduna Musa, peace be upon him, is now believed to have lived in the 13th century BCE. The Torah containing the five books ascribed to him is now known to have been written from the 10th to the mid 7th centuries BCE.

Talmud

There are two Talmuds: the Babylonian and the Palestinian (Jerusalem). The Babylonian was edited at the end of the fifth century CE. They are both written in a mix of Aramaic and Hebrew. They contain the commentaries on the Mishnah. They are alleged to record the oral traditions of Musa, but did not actually appear in written form until some seventeen centuries after his death, and at least nine centuries after the Torah itself had ceased to exist in its entirety.

Torah

It is accepted by the vast majority of historians that certainly after – if not before – the sacking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BCE and the enforced exile of some of the Jews to Babylon, the original Torah ceased to exist in its entirety. It is also accepted that the copies of the version which Ezra ('Uzayr

in Qur'an) is said to have subsequently compiled from memory were destroyed during the invasion of Jerusalem by Antiochus in 161 BCE. The Torah which the Jews have today is certainly not the Torah which was originally revealed to Musa, peace be on him. Most of the contents of these five books (Pentateuch) – and indeed of all the other books in the Old Testament – are in the form of various historical accounts of what happened before, during and after the lifetime of Musa, and so cannot possibly represent what was actually revealed to the Prophet Musa on Mount Sinai. The form that they take is more in the nature of a 'history' of the Tribe of Israel than of anything else. Moreover, it is accepted by Jews themselves that the Levites did change what had been originally revealed to Musa.

Yiddish

is a "language derived from High German dialects with additional vocabulary drawn from Hebrew and from Slavonic languages, written in Hebrew characters and spoken chiefly as a vernacular in eastern European Jewish communities and by emigrants from these communities throughout the world." (First edition of the *Reader's Digest Universal Dictionary*). There is not even the slightest possibility of it being a Semitic language, which also makes the possibility of Yiddish-speakers being Semitic very remote.

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The Book

This book is a comparative study of the place of al-Quds (Jerusalem) in the classic Judaic and Islamic traditions.

Al-Quds functions as an important holy place and as a central religious symbol within three great religious traditions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In the western world the Christian and Jewish sacred histories of Jerusalem are well known but the Islamic sacred history is less well known.

By studying al-Quds comparatively with respect to the Judaic and Islamic traditions, the author brings to light the Islamic tradition's perspective.

He concludes that only the Muslims have acted as guardians of al-Quds for all mankind irrespective of creed, and that only the Muslims are capable of assuming that role again, so that it will be again, as it is meant to be, a City of Peace.

The Author

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